The Coolest Music Book Ever Made aka The MC 500 Vol. 1

Marcus Chapman presents...

The Coolest Music Book Ever Made aka The MC 500 Vol. 1

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Celebrating 40 Years of Sounds, Life, and Culture Through an All-Star Team of Songs

Marcus Chapman

For everyone who knows the joy of spending time shopping in a record store, and for the kids of the present and future who will never have that experience...



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Intro: What is The MC 500 and What Makes This Book So Cool?

The MC 500 is a collection of songs that were originally presented on my Facebook and Twitter pages from June 5th to December 24th, 2013. The genesis of it dates back to Labor Day weekend of 1998 when music cable channel VH-1 did a countdown of the 100 Greatest Artists of Rock & Roll. Since then they've done various "100 Greatest", "50 Greatest", and "40 Greatest" countdowns of songs, albums, and artists from several different genres and decades. Music magazines like *Rolling Stone*, *Vibe*, and *The Source* have also had their own lists and countdowns of "Greatest" proportions over the years. With the exception of the latter two publications, as well as a few done by cable channel BET, all of these lists have come from those with a pop/rock perspective. The ones that didn't were exclusive to just hip-hop or R&B. The MC 500 does not fall into either category. In fact, it isn't even a "greatest" or "best" type of thing.

I've always been a big fan of countdowns. During my career as a radio personality I've hosted several "Top hits of the year" countdown shows, and I still have the paperwork for several more that were hosted by others. Inspired by those and the aforementioned VH-1 shows, in 2012 I attempted to make a list of my 100 favorite songs of all-time. I went through my entire collection of music and wrote down the songs that could possibly make the list. When I finished I realized one thing: there was no way I could limit this list to 100 songs because too many important cuts would've been left out. Knowing my

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birthday would be coming up the following June, I came up with a different game plan. Instead of 100 songs in total, I went for 100 songs to represent each decade of my life, plus another 100 to represent the future. 500 may seem like a lot, but let's do the math: I own over 2000 vinyl records and about 1000 CDs. Each of them contains an average of about 8 to 10 songs, so that's well over 20,000 songs to choose from. Granted some of them are on both vinyl and CD, but that's still a whole lot of songs, so 500 really isn't that many. In fact, it could've easily been The MC 600, but the number 500 has a certain quality to it, so I kept it at that (a list of songs that were considered for, but didn't make the 500, are included at the end of Vol. 2). Plus I spent 14 months of my life doing radio in Indianapolis where they have The Indy 500, so this is The MC 500.

In addition to countdowns, I've also had a lifelong fascination with All-Star Teams. As a kid I collected baseball and football cards, and my favorite cards to find were the ones that designated a player as an "N.L. All-Star", "A.L. All-Star", "NFC All-Pro", or "AFC All-Pro". To this day the Major League Baseball All-Star Game is my favorite sporting event of the year, and I own a copy of nearly every one that's been played since 1971 on DVD. With that in mind, The MC 500 became a way to assemble my own musical All-Star Team of songs. But choosing this 500 song team would've been extremely difficult without some type of structure, so how was it done and what was the criteria?

To get my 500, I created 20 brackets with 25 spots apiece. I then filled the first bracket with 25 songs as if they were the only songs that could make my All-Star Team. Once those titles were chosen, I moved on to the next bracket, then the next, and continued until all 20 were filled. I then went backwards starting from the final bracket and put each group of 25 songs in order until I got down to #1.

I've liked thousands of songs, so that wasn't enough for a tune to make this 500. These All-Stars had to have a little bit extra. Which ones did I have the most connection to? Which ones have I never gotten tired of hearing? Which ones evoke some type of reaction? Which ones cause me to hit the repeat button to hear them again once they've ended? Which ones could be classified as what I call "moment in time" songs; meaning they are specifically

connected to moments, events, places, or people who crossed my path and had a powerful impact on me, even if it was just briefly. The closer the song is to the #1 spot, the stronger the connection I have to it. Once the All-Star Team was assembled, and it was time to post clips of the songs, I included brief write-ups that stated why each cut was chosen and shared them with my online friends and followers. I thought I was just sharing some tunes and stories, but it turned out to be much more that that.

My friends and followers on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram include more than a few musicians and singers who actually helped create some of the songs I'd chosen. Since I usually tagged them in the write-ups I posted, both they and their fans got to see what I wrote about their songs. Not only did they occasionally comment on the posts, some of them gave me additional info about the actual recording sessions that included who sang and played on the tracks, or particular instruments and techniques that were used to make them. Among those who provided info or acknowledged the posts were members of the Isley Brothers, Parliament-Funkadelic, Bootsy's Rubber Band, the Ohio Players, Rufus, Cameo, the Bar-Kays, Rick James' Stone City Band, Slave, Lakeside, the Trammps, Public Enemy, NWA, Faze-O, Pleasure, Chocolate Milk, and Side Effect. Each of those acts experienced the height of their popularity in the 1970s and/or 1980s, but casual music fans don't necessarily know the other group members aside from the lead singers or band leaders who were out front. I soon realized that The MC 500 was a chance to say thanks and shine more light on those whose contributions have often been overlooked, as well as a way to help other fans celebrate songs that have never been discussed in literary form. All of this helped in my decision to preserve my online creation by turning it into a book (split into two volumes), but what makes this book so cool?

We live in a world of Google, YouTube, iTunes, Pandora, Rhapsody, Spotify, and various other music outlets. While it's great to have quick access to so much music, it's difficult to find anything if you don't know it exists in the first place. These books are designed to assist you in your search for music that you may not have been aware of before. The cool part is that you can use the information I've provided and go online to hear and download the songs at the same time that you're reading what I wrote. The oldest song on The MC 500 comes from the year 1967, while the most recent are from 2012. It includes everything from great party jams, to social statements, to late night slow cuts, to thought provoking inner explorations. It's a mixture of funk, R&B, hard rock, soft rock, hip-hop, jazz, disco, house, reggae, heavy metal, and anything else that has moved me over the years. While there have been books about songs from most of those genres, there hasn't been one with individual write-ups about songs from all of those genres together...until now.

These two volumes are also the first books where the profiled songs are not limited to chart hits. Although I've been studying chart information for over 20 years, chart positions played no role in whether a song was selected for The MC 500. While it does include classic chart toppers, some of the biggest hits (like The Isley Brothers' "Footsteps in the Dark") and some of the coolest songs ever made, were never released as singles, and therefore never made any charts. Music collector's all over the world can attest to the greatness of tracks like Edwin Starr's "Easin' In", "Nautilus" by Bob James, or Kool & the Gang's "N.T.", yet documentation of their greatness is not so easy to find... until now. I've also always been a full album person, and there are many great albums represented on this All-Star Team, but not necessarily by the hits that they're known for. Bands in particular were known for making great albums that contained hidden gems that were equally as good as the hit singles, if not better, and many of those songs are included in The MC 500.

Another cool thing about these books is that you have the choice of how you want to read the song entries. These aren't books with a story from beginning to end. Every song has its own individual write-up. You can either read the entries from 500 to 1 like they were originally presented online, or you can skip around and go in whatever order you like. The numerical order of the songs is important to me personally, but those numbers shouldn't be mistaken for me saying a higher ranked song is better or cooler than one that's ranked lower, or that I recommend one track more than another. If song #414 moves you more than song #10, that's understandable, because they're all top notch to me. The end of each book contains an Artist Index too, so you can see what songs are included by any particular artist and read all of their entries together if you prefer to do it that way.

With that being said, it should also be noted that these books are not specifically about artists. The MC 500 contains songs from a mixture of underground legends, one-hit-wonders, Rock & Roll Hall of Famers, and everything in between. How great the artists are considered to be, or how much I like or love the artists, was not a factor in choosing my All-Star Team; this is all about the individual songs themselves. While the majority of my favorite artists are well represented, some of them don't have any songs in these books at all, while a few artists I've never really cared for actually have tunes that made the cut. A few artists who I really enjoy, but don't have songs in the 500, include: Ashford & Simpson, Average White Band, Erykah Badu, Beyoncé, Big Sean, Angela Bofill, Busta Rhymes, Changing Faces, Stanley Clarke, Common, Sam Cooke, The Crusaders, First Choice, Michael Franks, The Geto Boys, Gladys Knight & the Pips, Jimi Hendrix, The Intruders, The Jacksons, Al Jarreau, Jethro Tull, Eddie Kendricks, Latimore, Ludacris, Mandrill, Curtis Mayfield, MFSB, Nicki Minaj, Notorious BIG, Wilson Pickett, Pink Floyd, Queen, Rose Royce, Sam & Dave, Gil Scott-Heron, Skyy, The Spinners, Johnnie Taylor, Rufus Thomas, Too Short, Trey Songz, Stanley Turrentine, Usher, Johnny Guitar Watson, Whodini, Bill Withers, Bobby Womack, Stevie Wonder, and ZZ Top. That makes nearly 50 artists who I like or love, and if they don't have anything on this All-Star Team then it musa be all about the songs for real.

Finally, as it says in the subtitle, these books are "a celebration of sounds, life, and culture". They celebrate the lives of those who created the sounds, the culture of music itself, and my own life through June 5, 2013. In fact, many of my real life experiences are included in the photos and write-ups for these songs because experiences are what we have as human beings, and that's what makes music so special to us. As Glenn Frey of the Eagles stated in 1994, people "did things" to the music his band made in the '70s. The songs that we connect to become the soundtrack of our lives, and I'm sure some of the songs contained in The MC 500 have been a part of your personal experiences just like they've been a part of mine. So for the songs you already know, you can

celebrate the fact that they're being given their props, ponder the memories that go along with them for you, and in some cases, get new info about them that you didn't have before. For the songs you don't know, take their inclusions on my All-Star Team as personal endorsements to something you might like to add to your own collection; with just one exception. If you don't care for music with explicit lyrics, there are some songs that won't be to your liking, but even in those cases you may at least find the write-ups interesting. Whether you're a serious music head or just a casual fan, I'm sure you'll find *The Coolest Music Book Ever Made aka The MC 500*, Volumes 1 and 2, to be entertaining, informative, and above all, worthwhile purchases that you can use for many years to come.

Enjoy, Marcus Chapman March 17, 2015 12:39 AM

NOTE: Honorable mentions go to "Good Kisser" by Usher and "Man of the Year" by Schoolboy Q. Both songs were hits in 2014, and both would've easily made my musical All-Star Team had they been released before it was put together in 2013. Another honorable mention goes to "The Way You Love Is Heaven" by Slave. I first heard that 1978 song in 1997, but I didn't totally get into it and the album it came from (*The Concept*) until after The MC 500 was created.

#501 Ooh Roy Ayers

Writer: Roy Ayers
Producer: Roy Ayers
Year: 1982/Album: Feeling Good
Label: Polydor
Memorable line:
"You make me feel like a...baby boy...
with a brand new toy."

I have to apologize for this being a bonus cut at #501 instead of being a much higher entry into The MC 500 itself. Like a lot of Roy Ayers fans, I believe most of his best albums came out between 1973 and 1978, with releases getting a little patchy after that. Most of Ayers' early '80s albums only have a couple of standout cuts on them; like "Destination: Motherland" and the awesome reggae vibed "I'll Just Keep Trying" from 1981's *Africa Center of the World.* So on the rare occasions that I came across his final Polydor album *Feeling Good* while record shopping in the '90s I wasn't in a rush to grab it because I figured it might not have been worth the asking price. I was wrong.

Feeling Good is easily the best album Roy Ayers released since 1978's You Send Me four years earlier. From the outstanding dance track "Our Time is Coming" to the album closing title track that was sampled for Puff Daddy's "Been Around the World" remix in 1997, Feeling Good is a winner from top to bottom (well, almost. The opening track "Fire Up the Funk" fails to live up to the remainder of the album, or its own title). But the song that just misses my 500 is the sexy mid-tempo jam "Ooh".

Aside from the bass guitar of William Allen and the drums of Jose Ortiz, Ayers plays all the instruments on this track while handling the lead &

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background vocals. His vibe solos are great as usual, and the whole song has a silky smooth feel that slides & glides with erotic ease. Had I discovered "Ooh" much earlier, it would've easily cracked the Top 200 at the very least. Unfortunately I didn't get the *Feeling Good* album until I was already putting The MC 500 together, thus "Ooh" was ineligible for entry. Roy Ayers is represented quite well on my All-Star Team with six songs though, so "Ooh" can be considered a highly recommended alternate cut or an "injury replacement" that attends the game anyway. And on that note, let the game begin...

500 to 401

#500 You Don't Know How It Feels Tom Petty

Writer: Tom Petty
Producer: Tom Petty
Album: Wildflowers
Year: 1994-95/Label: Warner Bros.
Memorable line:
"So let me get to the point.
Let's hit another joint!"

In the summer of 1994 I interned at WGCI in Chicago, and I began working there a year later. But in between, during the spring of 1995, I did another internship at WDEK; a pop-rock station in DeKalb, Illinois a few miles from Northern Illinois University where I was in my last semester. Not only did that internship truly prepare me for the radio industry, it also introduced me to this song. Tom Petty had already been a well established rock star with hits going all the way back to 1978. "You Don't Know How It Feels" was the first single from his latest album. It became a #1 hit on the Album Rock chart, and was in power rotation on WDEK. When I heard the line "let's hit another joint" I thought there was no way a Black radio station could get away with playing that; or that one would even try! Everyday I waited for this song to come on, and I'd laugh every time it did. A different version of this easy going jam says "roll another joint" instead of "hit another joint". I prefer the hit version. Nice drums and harmonica work.

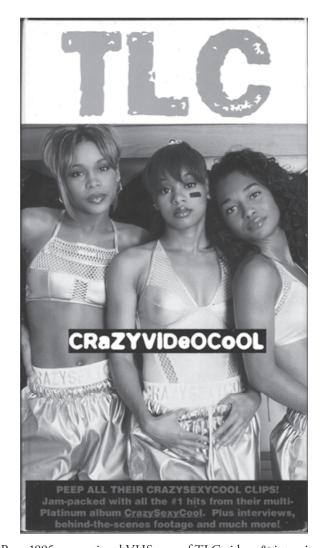
#499 Diggin' On You TLC

Writer: Kenneth Edmonds
Producer: Babyface
Year: 1995/Album: *CrazySexyCool*Label: LaFace/Arista
Memorable line:

"I was chillin' with my Kool-Aid when Miss Chilli came to relay."

The female trio of Tionne "T-Boz" Watkins, Lisa "Left Eye" Lopes, and Rozonda "Chilli" Thomas might have been the most important group of the 1990s; R&B or Pop. The made for TV film about them that aired on VH1 in 2013 is a great document of their legacy, and the album it was named after, *CrazySexyCool*, was easily one of the best CDs of the '90s. The mega hits "Creep" and "Waterfalls", and the slow jam "Red Light Special", were all great, but it was this fourth single from TLC's classic sophomore project that always got me. The video featured a remixed version, but the original from *CrazySexyCool* is far superior. "Diggin' On You" is T-Boz at her best, Babyface at his most lyrically clever, and the group overall at their peak.

NOTE: On November 14, 1998, I and my radio partner at the time, Dr. Luv, had the pleasure of interviewing the late Lisa Lopes over the phone on WGCI in Chicago. It was just before the release of the group's *Fanmail* CD. The clip can be found on my YouTube page: YouTube.com/MCMarcusChapman



Rare 1995 promotional VHS tape of TLC videos & interviews

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#498 Here I Go Again Whitesnake

Writer: David Coverdale, John Sykes
Producer: Mike Stone
Year: 1987/Album: Whitesnake
Label: Geffen
Memorable line:
"Like a drifter I was born to walk alone."

Sure the video featuring model Tawny Kitaen is legendary, but this song makes my All-Star Team for the lyrics; which says a lot since I've always been more of a music first/lyrics second dude. A #1 pop hit in 1987, "Here I Go Again" takes me back to 2002 when I was leaving Dallas to go back home to Chicago after being "on the road" doing radio for three years. The life of a radio personality may seem exciting, but it can also be very lonely at times. Many people in radio aren't from the cities that they work in, so getting away from the business for awhile by spending time with family or friends you had before getting into the industry can be very hard to do. Moving from city to city for jobs can also get old, but if you want the opportunity you often have to deal with it; especially since those opportunities are hard to come by. The theme of being on your own expressed in this song fits the radio lifestyle very well, and makes it a personal anthem. Besides, when it's time for another move to another city, what else is there to say but "Here I Go Again"?

#497 Blame It Jamie Foxx featuring T-Pain

Writers: James T. Brown, John Conte, Jr.,
Eric Bishop, Christopher Henderson,
Brandon R. Melanchon, Terius Nash,
Breyon Prescott, David Ballard,
Christopher Stewart, Faheem Rasheed Najm,
Nathan L. Walker
Producer: Christopher "Deep" Henderson
Year: 2009/Album: Intuition
Label: J Records
Memorable line:
"Then my pants got bigger."

I stopped drinking alcohol sometime around 1995; just before I started going to real clubs. As a result I've never used liquor to get sex. In fact, I actually prefer a woman to be sober so she can fully appreciate the experience and can't "blame it on the alcohol" like this cut suggests. Despite my approach being the opposite of this song, I have no problem with it or anything that makes someone feel more comfortable. After all, as long as you can handle your liquor, at the end of the night it's all about the results! THE jam of 2009, "Blame It" was the #1 R&B hit of that year and it continues to work at parties to this day.

#496 Just Shopping (Not Buying Anything) The Dramatics

Writer: Michael Henderson Producer: Michael Henderson Year: 1975/Album: *Drama V* Label: ABC Memorable line:

"Even though...I can't get your number."

With a tasty acoustic guitar from guest jazz musician Earl Klugh, some snappy drumming and solid bass, the first minute & 45 seconds of this is enough to get it on my 500; and that's before the first verse even starts. I discovered "Just Shopping" around 2003, and it's a standout cut from what's easily this group's best overall album aside from their 1972 debut *Whatcha See is Whatcha Get* on Stax Records. The Dramatics were one of the top vocal groups of the '70s, and this cut features their classic post-Stax lineup of L.J. Reynolds, Lenny Mayes, Willie Ford, Larry "Squirrel" Demps, and Ron Banks (they were actually billed as Ron Banks & The Dramatics' in 1975 and '76 due to the brief existence of a competing group of Dramatics led by former members William "Wee Gee" Howard and Elbert Wilkins). Recently "Just Shopping" has become a theme song of mine for women who I've had good conversations with in person, but never answer the phone or reply to text messages after that.

NOTE: Writer and producer Michael Henderson also had a respectable career as an artist in the late '70s and early '80s. After being introduced via jazz man Norman Connors on the hits "Valentine Love", "You Are My Starship", and "We Both Need Each Other" (a duet with Phyllis Hyman), Henderson's hits included "Wide Receiver", "Take Me I'm Yours", "Let Me Love You", "In the

Night-Time", and "Can't We Fall In Love Again" (another duet with Hyman). His first solo hit, the ballad "Be My Girl", was an even bigger hit for The Dramatics. Interestingly enough, both versions entered the Billboard R&B Singles chart during the same week in November 1976.

#495 Girls Dem Sugar Beenie Man featuring Mya

Writers: Moses Davis,
Chad Hugo, Pharrell Williams
Producers: The Neptunes
(Chad Hugo and Pharrell Williams)
Year: 2000/Album: *Art and Life*Label: Virgin
Memorable line:
"De girls dem need dis ni**aaaa."

I was hosting the 6 to 10 night show on WTLC in Indianapolis when this reggae meets R&B jam came out in summer 2000 and I was on *fire*. "Girls Dem Sugar" wasn't a huge hit, but it was always one of my favorites, and I looked forward to it being in my show each night. Mya's vocals added a sexy edge to this somewhat underrated Neptunes track. Beenie Man's use of the N word actually sounded funny to me when I finally heard the uncut version.

NOTE: I actually met Mya in Chicago on four separate occasions; more than any other artist. Twice in 1998 while she was promoting her debut album; again in 1999 when she sat in with me and my co-host Dr. Luv during the last hour of one of our Saturday night radio shows on WGCI; and finally in 2007 at a bowling ally event.

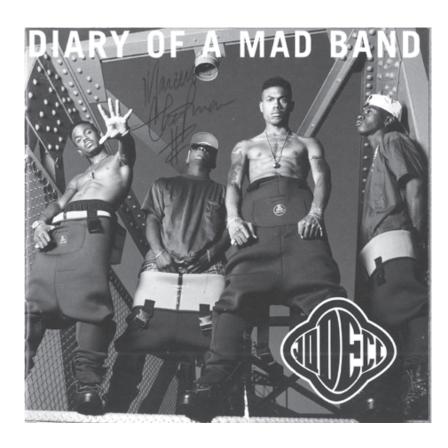


With Mya in 2007. Photo by Raymond Boyd. This pic was included in an issue of *Hip-Hop Weekly* magazine.

#494 My Heart Belongs To U Jodeci

Writer: Donald DeGrate
Producer: DeVante Swing
Year: 1994
Album: Diary of a Mad Band
Label: Uptown/MCA
Memorable line:
"Ba bop bop ba ba."

The opening track to the best album by my favorite group of the '90s, in the hands of a lesser group this could've easily been a wimpy song. But Jodeci had a knack for turning potentially sappy lyrics into cool songs that even gangstas could feel comfortable with. The intro and melody were both good examples of DeVante Swing's brilliance as a writer and producer, while K-Ci and Jo Jo were both at their peak as vocalists. "My Heart Belongs to U" is the first of three songs from the *Diary of a Mad Band* CD on my 500, and the first of five Jodeci entries overall. Props go to Mr. Dalvin for having the coolest pose in the *Mad Band* cover photo.



#493 What's My Name? Rihanna featuring Drake

Writers: Mikkel S. Eriksen, Tor Erik Hermansen,
Ester Dean, Traci Hale, Aubrey Graham
Producers: StarGate, Kuk Harrell
Year: 2010/Album: Loud
Label: Def Jam
Memorable line:
"So I surrender, to every word you whisper,
and every door you enter, I will let you in."

Rihanna is one sexy chick, and the string of hits she's enjoyed has guaranteed her status as one of the top artists of the 2000s. I knew she had that potential from the first time I saw the video for her debut "Pon De Replay" in 2005. Since her big breakthrough in 2007 with "Umbrella", Rihanna has delivered on that early promise with jams like "Rude Boy", "Diamonds", and "Man Down"; as well as guest appearances on tracks like "Live Your Life" by T. I. and "Run This Town" with Jay-Z and Kanye West. But as entertaining as those cuts were for me, her 2010 smash "What's My Name?" is the one that connected enough to make my 500 song All-Star Team. Seeing her perform it on Saturday Night Live didn't hurt her or this song's status with me either. Having Drake drop a verse in the beginning was a good move too; although I always thought his opening line "I heard you good with them soft lips" would be a pretty disrespectful thing to say to a woman. But can you imagine hearing a man from India with a thick accent singing this song's hook? Well I don't have to imagine it. I heard it for myself, and I tried desperately not to laugh because I knew that would be disrespectful. That moment comes back to me every time I think about this song, but the vocal performance from Bad Gal Ri Ri herself is what earns "What's My Name?" a spot on The MC 500.

#492 Feel the Need Chocolate Milk

Writers: David Barard, Amadee Castenell,
Robert Dabon, Steve Hughes, Frank Richard,
Dwight Richards, Joseph Smith,
Mario Tio, Kenneth Williams
Producers: Allen Toussaint and Marshall Sehorn
Year: 1976-77/Album: Comin'
Label: RCA
Memorable line:
"First you affected my body,
now you've affected my mind."

Chocolate Milk was a funk band from New Orleans who were sort of underground. They never had any Gold or Platinum albums or singles, but they made some damn good music; particularly their work with producers Allen Toussaint and Marshall Sehorn from 1975 through 1979. "Feel the Need" is the first of 7 songs from them on my 500, and it starts out with the sound of the wind blowing and some great guitar work from Mario Tio. Both of those elements create a cool dreamy atmosphere, and that intro by itself makes this cut stand out. The main part of the song kicks in after about 30 seconds with drumming from Dwight Richards and a bass line from David Barard that fits the band's name perfectly. Lead singer Franky J. Richard turns in a fine vocal performance, while saxophone player Amadee Castenell gives a smooth solo. The background vocals towards the end are also worth noting. A nice midtempo funk jam that sounds especially good at night.

#491 Midnight Flight Jake Jacobson

Writer: Jake Jacobson
Producer: Jake Jacobson
Year: 2007/Album: Finding Home
Label: Rolling Records
Memorable line:
"Free your mind! Free your soul!"

I discovered this cut in 2012 while I was at an Office Depot store in Atlanta. The store manager got the name of the artist, I found it on Amazon, and downloaded it. "Midnight Flight" is a great inner exploration song that, like the previous entry at #492, sounds especially good late at night. It starts off like an earthy acoustic jam, but when the chorus kicks in, the vocals and drums lead the other instruments in an intense explosion of sound that takes the listener on a journey. The song goes back and forth between the two extremes in a way that's reminiscent of several of Led Zeppelin's greatest tracks (most notably 1973's "Over the Hills and Far Away"). Yet unlike those Zep tunes, "Midnight Flight" inspires a unique combination of head banging and serenity at the same time as opposed to energetic hard rocking. I actually heard another song in the store on the same day that I discovered this one that would've probably made the 500 too, but I wasn't able to get any info on the artist or title. Fortunately I can always free my mind, free my soul whenever I like thanks to this gem from independent artist Jake Jacobson.

#490

The Big Payback EPMD

Writers: Erick Sermon, Parrish Smith Producers: Erick Sermon, Parrish Smith Year: 1989/Album: *Unfinished Business* Label: Fresh Records

Label: Fresh Record

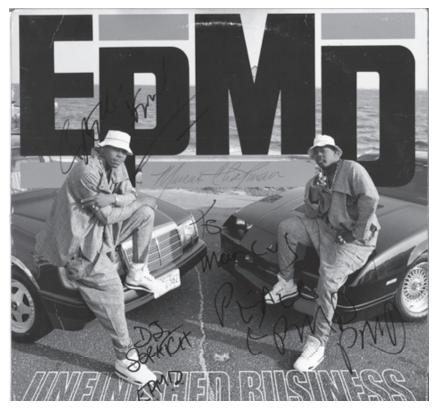
Memorable line:

"But the windows were tinted and we couldn't get a look. Why? There was smoke from the rubber he cooked the big payback!"

At age 16 I got my first summer job at a McDonald's about a block from Chicago's Evergreen Plaza shopping mall. It was owned by a friend of my sister named Herb Bias, Sr. who passed away in 2007. He also owned the one closer to our house on 95th & Jeffery, and he was one of the few Black men at the time to have his own McDonald's franchises. One day a manager at the store named Ahmad told another manager named Ken that he needed to listen to this new cut from EPMD because of how great the bass would sound on his car stereo system. Ken listened to it in Ahmad's headphones for about ten seconds. He then nodded his head, did a little dance, snatched the tape out the walkman and proceeded to his car so he could turn it up loud in the parking lot. I have turned it up loud in my car many times since that day.

The awesome beat was looped from a James Brown cut called "Baby Here I Come". According to the liner notes of the album it came from (a 1988 compilation of previously unreleased material called *James Brown: Motherlode*) the track was actually recorded live on stage at an auditorium in Augusta, Georgia *after*la concert on October 1st 1969. Funny how JB's relentless approach caused the musicians to leave his band not long after that, but helped create one of the hottest tracks of Hip-Hop's "Golden Era" twenty years later.

NOTE: A rarely seen video for "The Big Payback" was made showing EPMD and fellow rappers NWA at a gun range. Unfortunately it featured an inferior remix instead of the original version that makes my 500.



EPMD album signed by Erick Sermon, Parrish Smith, and DJ Scratch

#489 Still Talkin' Eazy-E

Writers: O'Shea Jackson, Tracy Curry
Producers: Dr. Dre, DJ Yella
Year: 1988-89/Album: Eazy-Duz-It
Label: Ruthless/Priority
Memorable line:
"Ni**az don't see I'm a hundred percent legit, and you know it ain't about all that bulls**t."

In the mid-1990s the late C Delores Tucker and other older Black folks targeted so-called "gangsta rap" for everything wrong with America's youth. One thing they never understood was just how much fun a lot of that music was. Humor played a major role in many Dr. Dre productions, and this Eazy-E classic is easily the best example of that. The lyrics on their own could cause concern, but the inside joke is in the music itself. The main sample comes from x-rated comedian Rudy Ray Moore's 1970 Christmas album, while the ridiculous dance classic "Do the Funky Chicken" by Rufus Thomas from that same year added to the scenario between the verses. Throw in Dre, Eazy, and Ice Cube imitating drunken old men reminiscing on their younger days, including Cube's dead-on impression of Richard Pryor, and the song becomes a lot less gangsta than it seems to be. All around, "Still Talkin" is an absolute masterpiece that I've never gotten tired of. Hilarious, brilliant, and possibly Eazy's best song.

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1994 radio show flyer

#488 Too Hot Ta Trot Commodores

Writers: Milan Williams, Walter Orange, Thomas McClary, Lionel Richie, Ronald LaPread, William King Producers: James Carmichael, Commodores Year: 1977-78

Albums: Commodores Live! and
Commodores Greatest Hits
Label: Motown
Memorable line:
"Come on! Come on! Come on!
Come on! Come ON!"

Twenty years after this song was released I was made the "music coordinator" for the three hour "Old School Sunday" show on radio station WGCI in Chicago. The show had originally been hosted by Crazy Howard McGee, then by Mike Luv & The Diz. When the latter duo were hired as hosts of the weeknight 6 to 10 show, they were replaced on "Old School Sunday" by radio veteran Ramonski Luv, myself, and a local comedian named Roy Little who went by the stage name Tornado aka "Big Daddy Woo Woo". When my partners saw "Too Hot Ta Trot" listed as the second song we were going to play after "Brick House" on our Back-to-Back Artist of the Day feature, they immediately let me know they didn't agree with my choice. We played it anyway though, and in a meeting the following week, Program Director Elroy Smith called the song "a stiff"; meaning it wasn't a hit; or was it?

"Too Hot Ta Trot" was made for, and was prominently featured in, the 1978 film *Thank God It's Friday*. It reached #1 on the Billboard R&B chart in February of that year, it was played in several episodes of "Soul Train" (including for the Soul Train line), and in 2001 I heard it on an oldies station in

Dallas. Maybe it wasn't popular in Chicago, but "Too Hot Ta Trot" was the last real good up-tempo joint this band did before they focused almost entirely on pop flavored ballads. Walter Orange wrote the lyrics and sang lead, while Lionel Richie added in a few lines on the funky bridge. I actually prefer the 3 and a half minute version on 1978's *Commodores Greatest Hits* compilation over the full length, 5 and a half minute version from 1977's double album *Commodores Live!* Either way, this unheralded Commodores track gets a spot on my 500.

#487 Who Dat JT Money featuring Solé

Writers: Christopher A. Stewart,
Jeff Thompkins, Tony Mercedes,
Tonya Johnston, Tab, DiAndre Davis
Producer: Chris "Tricky" Stewart
Year: 1999/Album: *Pimpin' On Wax*Label: Priority
Memorable line:

"Playa I don't know you better tell me who you wit!"

Overall, 1999 was the best year of my life so far. That summer was particularly great, and this song was one of the hottest joints out at the time. An obvious club banger, the fast paced energy of "Who Dat" still gets me hyped, crunked up, turned up, or whatever term you want to use. Rapper JT Money never had another hit besides this one, but it's enough to get him a spot on my 500 song All-Star Team. Featured artist Solé, who later married singer Ginuwine, had a hit of her own in '99 called "4, 5, 6". Both it and "Who Dat" were certified Gold singles.

#486 Dark Vader Instant Funk

Writers: Jimmy Sigler, Bunny Sigler
Producer: Bunny Sigler
Year: 1979/Album: Instant Funk
Label: Salsoul
Memorable line:
"A tall Black man, entirely fearless, came from a star, we know not where."

Why does the bad guy always have to wear black? The 1977 film *Star Wars* brought us the villain Darth Vader dressed in black. 1978 brought my alltime favorite cartoon "Challenge of the Super Friends". Superman, Batman, Wonder Woman, and the traditional heroes were joined on the show by 3 "minority" heroes; one of whom was a lightning bolt throwin' brother named Black Vulcan. The following year the band Instant Funk combined the two elements and flipped them into a song about a Black super hero. Not only could "Dark Vader" have easily been the theme for a cartoon, it should've been the follow-up single to Instant Funk's million selling smash "I Got My Mind Made Up (You Can Get It Girl)", which reached #1 R&B and #20 pop. I didn't hear this until about 2003, but it's definitely a great snapshot of the era it came from.

#485 Flow On (Move Me No Mountain) Above the Law

Writers: Jerry Ragovoy, Aaron Schroeder
Producers: Dr. Dre, Laylaw, Above the Law
Year: 1990/Album: *Livin' Like Hustlers*Label: Ruthless/Epic
Memorable line:
"What happened to 'peace'?
F**k 'peace'. I'm outta here!"

Here's a trivia question: what's the only album Dr. Dre produced that didn't go Gold or Platinum? The answer is *Livin' Like Hustlers* from the group Above the Law, but it surely wasn't because of the music. The album is among my favorites, and I could've chosen several songs from it for my 500, but this is the one that still moves me the most. Rappers Cold 187 (who I met in 1999) and KMG (who passed away in 2012) flowed with California street rhymes over an excellent use of the Barry White/Love Unlimited song that makes up the subtitle. "Some fly ass gangsta sh*t" is a good description of "Flow On", and that phrase inspired me to entitle a jazzy funk tape I made in 1992 *Some Ole Fly Gangsta Sheet*.

#484 Fantasy Earth, Wind & Fire

Writers: Maurice White,
Eddie del Barrio, Verdine White
Producer: Maurice White
Year: 1977-78/Albums: All 'N All
and The Best of Earth, Wind & Fire Vol. I
Label: Columbia
Memorable line:
"Every man has a place, in his heart there's a space,

Earth, Wind & Fire were an early childhood favorite of mine. This is the first of 12 songs they made from 1975 to 1979 to make my 500, and I could've easily chosen several more. The first time I heard "Fantasy" as a kid I was absolutely floored. Although it was originally included on the classic album *All 'N All*, I prefer the shorter version that was released as a single in 1978 and included on *The Best of Earth, Wind & Fire Vol. I.*

and the world can't erase his fantasies."

As great as this song is, from the live footage I've seen of the band in their prime it also seems to be the one gem from their catalog they were never able to truly capture the magic of in concert. In addition to being a lead singer, Philip Bailey was also the conga player. With him out front on vocals, the congas went unused when they performed "Fantasy" live. Thus that extra element that keeps the rhythm moving like it does on the record was missing from the concerts. Either way, "Fantasy" is still an elegant classic that gets a well deserved spot on my 500 song All-Star Team.



All 'N All album with rare promotional sticker

#483 Payback Is a Dog The Stylistics

Writers: Thom Bell, Kenny Gamble
Producer: Thom Bell
Year: 1973/Album: *Rockin' Roll Baby*Label: Avco
Memorable line:
"One day you'll see just how it feels.
Payback is a dog!"

Success is the sweetest revenge; especially when people go from making you feel like less than nothing to secretly wishing they could be like you. The Stylistics made their name through dreamy love songs like "Betcha By Golly, Wow", "You Are Everything", and "You Make Me Feel Brand New". While the lyrics to those classics were written by the late Linda Creed, "Payback Is a Dog" was co-written by Philadelphia International Records co-founder Kenny Gamble. His lyrics gave this dog a bite not normally associated with The Stylistics, and that may be why it stands out in their catalog (it may also be why "Payback Is a Dog" wasn't released as a single). Not even the sweet sounds provided by Thom Bell and the Philly musicians on this track, or the vocals of lead singer Russell Thompkins, Jr., can mask the true power of the song's subject. Although it's about a relationship gone awry, "Payback" fits in well with the "betrayal and revenge" theme found in many Black films and songs of the early 1970s. During that era, The Stylistics recorded some of the finest music ever made, but this somewhat overlooked gem is their representative on my 500 song All-Star Team.

NOTE: In 2007 I met Stylistics lead singer Russell Thompkins, Jr. He looked like he's taken very good care of himself over the years and I was very impressed. I took a picture with him and got their first two classic albums autographed.

#482 Double Vision Foreigner

Writers: Lou Gramm, Mick Jones
Producers: Ian McDonald,
Keith Olsen, Mick Jones
Year: 1978/Album: *Double Vision*Label: Atlantic
Memorable line:
"Seein' double double!"

A staple of classic rock radio, "Double Vision" is an energetic jam about getting so drunk that you can't see straight, but it has a totally different meaning for me. After rocking the mic on stage as one of the hosts for Chicago's biggest party one night in the summer of 1999, I took an extremely bad chick to a private section of the club. She then proceeded to give me a big surprise by lifting her shirt and showing me her pair of double D-cup sized breasts. Double vision indeed! Just one, or rather, two reasons my *Sex Time And Radio* books had to be written, and hopefully one day will be seen on screen. Who should play the part that goes with this song?

#481 Soliloquy of Chaos Gang Starr

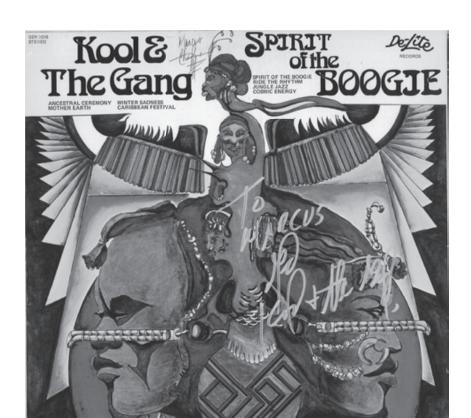
Writers: Keith Elam, Christopher Martin
Producers: DJ Premiere & The GURU
Year: 1992/Album: Daily Operation
Label: Chrysalis
Memorable line:
"Did you come to see my show
or to the stupid ni**a playoffs?"
and
"Whether you die or kill them,
it's just another brother dead,
but I know you'll never get that through your head."

After getting my first car in summer 1992 I went to the Evergreen Plaza shopping mall on Chicago's south west side and bought four rap tapes from the Sam Goody record store: X Clan's sophomore album Xodus (a huge disappointment), AMG's Bitch Betta Have My Money (a classic), Das EFX Straight From Da Sewer (still a favorite), and Gang Starr's Daily Operation. The latter two albums both have two songs apiece on my 500. The Afrocentric/conscious rap movement that started in summer '88 was on the way out, and Gang Starr was among the last acts of that sub-genre to put out a strong album. The sample is a jazz version of the 1973 Foster Sylvers hit "Misdemeanor" by Ahmad Jamal, while the lyrics talk about violence at hip-hop shows from the artist perspective. "Soliloquy of Chaos" is easily one of the best cuts ever done by Guru and Premiere.

#480 Spirit of the Boogie Kool & the Gang

Writers: Ronald Bell, Don Boyce, Kool & the Gang
Producers: Ronald Bell, Kool & the Gang
Year: 1975/Album: Spirit of the Boogie
Label: De-Lite
Memorable line:
"Let it eeeeease right on insiiiide."

Kool & the Gang were on a creative roll when they released this. It's sort of a sequel to their million-selling hit "Jungle Boogie" from two years earlier, which featured Don Boyce as "The Boogie Man" on vocals; thus the line "the boogie's back again!" "Spirit of the Boogie" is also the first of three #1 R&B hits from 1975 on my 500 that I've *neven* heard played on any radio station. I suggested we play it after "Jungle Boogie" on WGCI's "Old School Sunday" show in 1997, but we went with a Kool & the Gang back-to-back of "Hollywood Swinging" and "Open Sesame" instead. However, any doubts about whether "Spirit" was really a hit were eliminated for me after watching the Soul Train dancers go crazy over it on an episode of the show from '75. A fun song overall that's been used in several rap songs; including one that almost made my 500 ("Friend of Mine" by Notorious B.I.G.).



Spirit of the Boogie album signed by Kool & the Gang drummer "Funky" George Brown

#479 In Love With a Thug Snoop Dogg

Writers: Calvin Broadus, Ron Dudley, Trevor Horn,
Jonathan Jeczalik, Gary Langan, Paul Marley
Producer: Meech Wells
Year: 1999/Album: No Limit Top Dogg
Label: No Limit/Priority
Memorable line:
"She gettin' a little mo' than the schoolgirl knowledge."

As far as I'm concerned, the "thug" mentality that took over young Black America in the early 2000s was a trap that distorted the image and beliefs of what it meant to really be a man. It also helped increase the number of incarcerated Black men, and this song actually touches on that subject to a certain degree. Snoop has never been known for social commentary, yet he actually paints a realistic picture of how things can end up for both thugs, and the women who fall for them, by the end of this little love song. "In Love With a Thug" producer Meech Wells also made great use of the Art of Noise slow jam classic "Moments in Love" in the track. Like many songs on the 500, I usually hit the repeat button when I play this.

#478 Super-Hoe Boogie Down Productions

Writers: Lawrence Krisna Parker, Scott Sterling
Producers: KRS-One & Scott La Rock
Year: 1987/Album: *Criminal Minded*Label: B-Boy Records
Memorable line:
"If you're a guy a nine'll do the trick,
but if you're a girl, you need some...Flowers!"

For a 14-year-old boy, rap songs about sex are exciting. In 1987 this was one of the most exciting of them all. Rapper KRS-One could've talked about damn near anything over a beat this funky, but tales of his DJ's sexual appeal to women, combined with the catchy female sing-a-long chorus, made me like it that much more. "Super-Hoe" is one of *the* highlights from one of hip-hop's greatest albums of all-time. Sadly, DJ Scott La Rock was gunned down in New York before many rap fans even heard this. Fortunately KRS learned from the experience, became "The Teacher", and helped kick off the Afrocentric/conscious rap movement the following year with the classic album *By All Means Necessary*.

#477 Help Me Find the Road Chocolate Milk

Writers: David Barard, Amadee Castenell,
Robert Dabon, Steve Hughes, Frank Richard,
Dwight Richards, Joseph Smith,
Mario Tio, Kenneth Williams
Producers: Allen Toussaint and Marshall Sehorn
Year: 1978/Album: We're All In This Together
Label: RCA
Memorable line:

"I don't know which way to turn. Give me a sign Lord."

Opening with a quiet piano solo, "Help Me Find the Road" by Chocolate Milk is the closest thing to gospel on my 500 song All-Star Team. Lead singer Franky J. Richard gave a strong yet controlled vocal performance that brought the "asking God for guidance" feeling of the lyrics across perfectly. The background vocals and handclaps from the other band members also fit perfectly, and by the time it ends a feeling of *deliverance* is achieved. Like many others, my life has been filled with ups and downs. Since I first heard it in 1999, "Help Me Find the Road" has been the song that captures those times when I don't have the solutions to my problems, and I can't figure out what to do next to make things better. An open prayer that helps make the case for *We're All In This Together* being the best Chocolate Milk album overall.

#476 Spellbound The Bar-Kays

Writers: James Banks, Henderson Thigpen
Producer: Allen Jones
Year: 1976-77/Album: *Too Hot to Stop*Label: Mercury
Memorable Line:
"I know that you've been hurt
by someone that I remind you of.
But woman that's just not reason enough
to deny yourself of this precious love!"

This is the first of 7 songs in the 500 from the Bar-Kays; one of *the* bands that defined the late '70s-early '80s funk era. "Spellbound" is basically a tale of a dude who knows he has it goin' on. He's telling a woman she'll be sorry if she doesn't quit frontin' and get with his program because she knows that's what she wants to do anyway...and because the other dudes she's been dealing with don't measure up to him. I've felt that way many times over the years; especially when I first really began paying attention to the album this song came from in the summer of 1999. "Spellbound" was the third single from *Too Hot to Stop*; the outstanding LP that kicked off the Bar-Kays' golden era for Mercury Records after their exit from Stax. While the entire band is outstanding here, Winston Stewart's keyboard work and the vocal stylings of Larry Dodson are especially worth noting. Mid-tempo funk with a cocky rock star strut, and a personal anthem.



With Bar-Kays singer Larry Dodson and the *Too Hot to Stop* album signed by band leader James Alexander in 2007

#475 Fly Like an Eagle The Steve Miller Band

Writer: Steve Miller
Producer: Steve Miller
Year: 1976-77
Album: Fly Like an Eagle
Label: Capitol
Memorable line:
"Time keeps on slippin',
slippin', slippin', into the future."

An early childhood favorite, I remember hearing this on the clock radio in my parents' room as I got ready for nursery school in the mornings. The station playing it was the legendary WLS-AM in Chicago, and this is just the first of several '70s pop/rock songs on my 500 that I was exposed to back then. "Fly Like an Eagle" is an all-time classic that still receives radio play on a regular basis. The fact that it reached #2 on the Billboard pop charts, and sold a million copies as the third single from a multi-platinum album, proves just how big of a hit it really was (I'm sure it had already received a lot of airplay on FM rock stations when the album was first released). During an appearance as guest host of "The Midnight Special" on January 25, 1974, Miller performed an early version of "Fly Like and Eagle" that didn't include the "Memorable line" I chose or the catchy "doot-doot-doo-doo" vocal part. Apparently those were added to the song at a later date.

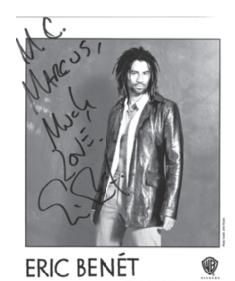
#474 Femininity Eric Benét

Writers: Eric Benét, Christian Warren
Producer: Christian Warren
Year: 1997/Album: *True to Myself*Label: Warner Bros.
Memorable line:
"A lady in the purest sense of elegance,
but when the lights go down girl you're makin' love,
strong, wild and free!"

I always enjoyed hearing this song when it aired on my Friday night/Saturday morning show "The Afterset" on Chicago radio station WGCI in the spring of 1997. But it's what happened later in the following year that guaranteed "Femininity" a spot on this musical All-Star Team. It was November 7, 1998. I'd finally gotten my breakthrough to primetime radio as the host of the Saturday night 6 to 10 show three weeks earlier. My partner on the show, Dr. Luv, had invited a female down to the station to hang out with him while we did our thing. She was from out of town, but was staying in Waukegan near the Great Lakes Naval Base because she was in the military. Fortunately for me she brought her very attractive younger sister with her. While talking after the show, I basically let the little sister know that Waukegan was a pretty long distance from where I lived on the south side of Chicago, and I wasn't going to drive all the way out there to watch movies and eat popcorn.

A week and a few days later I made the long drive to pay her a visit. When I got inside her apartment we chilled for about 10 minutes in the living room before heading to her bedroom in the back. The overall vibe and atmosphere were perfect. She had candles lit and a nice CD playing with current R&B slow jams on it. "Femininity" was one of the first songs I heard, and by the time it ended I was *in there*. The combination of physical attraction,

atmosphere, and the right music kept things going non-stop for a long time. My hostess had wisely set the CD player on "continuous play", and when this song came on again over an hour later we were still going strong. I smiled proudly to myself because I knew I was putting in some serious work. I made the trip to Waukegan one more time for an equally satisfying round two before my new friend returned home; never to be seen again. When a little girl called the station on Christmas night saying she was from Waukegan, Dr. Luv responded "you know my partner MC Marcus Chapman spends a lotta time up there." All I could do was laugh.





Autographed promotional photos of Eric Benét and Adina Howard

#473 Freak Like Me Adina Howard

Writers: Eugene Hanes, Mark Valentine,
Loren Hill, William Collins,
George Clinton, Gary Cooper
Producers: Mass Order
Year: 1995/Album: *Do You Wanna Ride?*Label: Mecca Don/EastWest
Memorable line:
"I don't care what they say.
I'm not about to pay nobody's way."

My girlfriend at the time couldn't stand her ("what you need a poster of *that* bitch for?!"), but I loved Adina Howard. She was sexy, she was fun, and make no mistake about it, the girl could flat out sing. Lots of rap songs used P-Funk music and/or lyrics, but to me, "Freak Like Me" is the best P-Funk based R&B song of the '90s; making excellent use of "I'd Rather Be With You" from Bootsy's Rubber Band. Although this was her only major hit, Adina's underrated debut CD *Do You Wanna Ride?* is still one of my favorites. One more song from it made the 500, and I almost picked a third one.

#472 Living After Midnight Judas Priest

Writers: Rob Halford, K.K. Downing, Glenn Tipton
Producer: Tom Allom
Year: 1980/Album: *British Steel*Label: Columbia
Memorable line:
"Living after midnight. Rockin' till the dawn.
Lovin' till the mornin', then I'm *gone*!"

British band Judas Priest were the first act to identify themselves as being "heavy metal" as opposed to "rock" or "hard rock". Along with the classic "Breaking the Law", "Living After Midnight" was one of the key tracks that made 1980's *British Steel* the band's breakthrough album. It also became a personal anthem while I hosted the 6 to 10 night show on WTLC in Indianapolis twenty years after its release. My energy level was usually pretty high after leaving work, so staying up until 3 am was the norm rather than the exception. Most of those nights were spent alone, but the ones that included company were pretty eventful. Yet aside from a few road trips to see college girls, I never slept over at women's homes when I went to visit them in 2000. They usually stayed if they visited me, but not the other way around. If they had kids I left before the babies were awake. If they had roommates I was out before they returned. The chorus and "Memorable line" of this kick-ass track says it all: "Livin' after midnight, rockin' till the dawn. Lovin' till the mornin', then I'm gone!"

#471 See the Light Earth, Wind & Fire

Writers: Larry Dunn, Philip Bailey, Louise Anglin
Producer: Maurice White with Charles Stepney
Year: 1975/Album: *That's the Way of the World*Label: Columbia
Memorable line:

"For so long there's been such darkness,
got to be a better way."

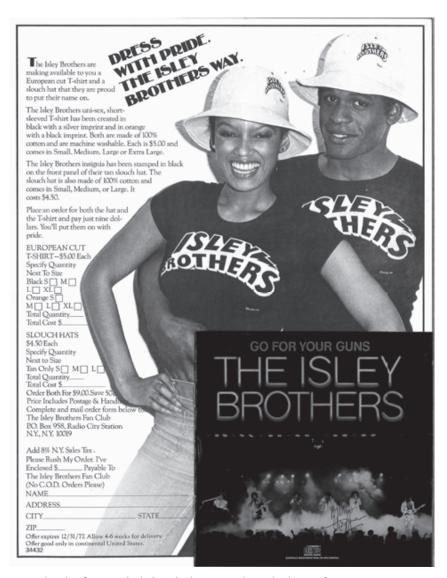
My cousin Barry, who turned me on to this band when I was a kid, says his wife Doris gets upset with him when he calls their music "religion". This is one of the songs that support his theory. "See the Light" starts out fast, but it breaks down to a whole different mid-tempo groove. It includes some great keyboard work from Larry Dunn and vocals from Philip Bailey. The lyrics basically serve as a prayer, and the fact that "See the Light" was the last song on the album that shot Earth, Wind & Fire to super-stardom says a lot about the band's mission for their music. In Billboard magazine's year end charts for 1975, *That's the Way of the World* was the #1 R&B album of the year, and the #2 Pop album of the year. Since the #1 Pop LP of '75 was Elton John's *Greatest Hits* collection, Earth, Wind & Fire actually had the top album of all new material on the Pop side as well as R&B that year; a feat that was not accomplished by any other artist in the 1970s. This lesser known spiritual album closer was definitely a fitting finale to that classic release.

#470 The Pride The Isley Brothers

Writers: Ernie Isley, Chris Jasper, Marvin Isley,
Ronald Isley, O'Kelly Isley, Rudolph Isley
Producers: The Isley Brothers
Year: 1977/Album: *Go For Your Guns*Label: T-Neck/CBS
Memorable line:

"What makes you want to do the best you can?
What makes you a better man?"

It's funny to me that most people only think of slow jams when they think of the Isley Brothers, because in their heyday as a funk band in the '70s they consistently served up hard hitting up-tempo joints like this. The bass guitar was the most celebrated instrument in funk, and the "The Pride" was one of the shining moments for bass playing youngest brother Marvin. This was a #1 R&B hit, and the opening track to their best all around album, *Go For Your Guns*; an album that I've had since my brother-in-law Ralph gave it to me when I was a little kid. One more song from it makes my 500.



Mail order form included with the original vinyl release of Go For Your Guns

#469 Never Can Say Goodbye James Brown

Writer: James Brown Producer: James Brown Year: 1972/Album: *There It Is* Label: Polydor

I started doing radio in college in 1992, but "MC Marcus Chapman" the radio personality would not have gotten all that far if I hadn't studied the career and life of James Brown in late 1994/early '95. As I wrote in the "Sacrifice of a Sex Machine" chapter of *Sex Time And Radio Vol. 1 & 2: Blueprint of a Radio Star*, James Brown "put what I was thinking and feeling (in 1994/95) into songs, and I'm not so sure if I would've survived some of the craziness I was soon to encounter if I hadn't studied his career." I also wrote that Brown "gave me a goal to shoot for as an individual. His music, values, and work ethic provided me with the ammunition I needed to hit the targets, and conquer the obstacles I would face throughout my career." This is the first of 8 songs on the 500 from the James Brown catalog; including one from his band.

A #1 R&B/#2 Pop hit the previous year for the Jackson 5, and a big hit for Isaac Hayes, JB totally eliminated the lyrics to "Never Can Say Goodbye" and turned it into a mellow horn, drums & rhythm guitar driven groove. It almost sounds like the band was just warming up in the studio, and James turned to the engineer and said "record this!" Good thing he did. Brown then added some talk about being in a parked car with a girl who "all of a sudden...frees up and go into her ignorant bag". Exactly what JB meant by that is subject to interpretation, but it reminds me of my own parked car experiences with women in the mid to late '90s. "Never Can Say Goodbye" is as smooth of a cool-out groove that The JB's ever played. Props go to drummer John "Jabo" Starks, bass player Fred Thomas, guitarists Jimmy Nolen and Harlon

"Cheese" Martin, trombonist/band leader Fred Wesley and the other JB's for their performances here.

NOTE: It's interesting that the writer's credit on this version of "Never Can Say Goodbye" went to James Brown instead of original composer Clifton Davis.

#468 Theme for the Moonchild Pleasure

Writers: Donald Hepburn, Michael Hepburn, Pleasure Producer: Wayne Henderson Year: 1976/Album: *Accept No Substitutes* Label: Fantasy

One of the great injustices of music history is that this jazzy funk band wasn't bigger. Like their New Orleans counterparts Chocolate Milk, Portland natives Pleasure never had any Gold or Platinum releases, but from 1975 through 1979 they put out some damn good music. Their first four albums were produced by Wayne Henderson from The Crusaders, and their second, *Accept No Substitutes*, is my pick for their overall best. This instrumental is one of four songs from the album on my All-Star Team, and the first of eight songs from this band on The MC 500 overall. It's also possibly the best straight up jazz song Pleasure ever made. "Theme for the Moonchild" features some *excellent* saxophone playing from Dennis Springer, and trombone work from Dan Brewster. A can't miss mellow jam from an under appreciated band.

#467 Runnin' Earth, Wind & Fire

Writers: Maurice White, Larry Dunn, Eddie del Barrio Producer: Maurice White Year: 1977-78/Album: All 'N All Label: Columbia Memorable line:

"If you don't understand me...it's yo' fault!"



All 'N All album with rare promotional sticker

One thing I always loved about Earth, Wind & Fire was their willingness to display their talents as a band by putting at least one instrumental song on every album they did. In fact, "Runnin" actually won the 1978 Grammy award for Best R&B Instrumental. Sure there's some jazzy scat singing on it

from Philip Bailey, but if it doesn't have lyrics then it's instrumental. I also love how they put the "behind-the-scenes" talking part in there towards the end for seemingly no reason at all. Many fans consider *All 'N All* to be the best EW&F album. The fact that this awesome jam isn't even one of the cuts normally used to help that argument speaks to how much of a classic that release really was and still is.

#466 Anticipation The Bar-Kays

Writers: James Alexander, Larry Dodson, Allen Jones, Winston Stewart, Michael Beard, Charles Allen, Harvey Henderson, Lloyd Smith, Frank Thompson Mark Bynum, Sherman Guy, Michael Toles Producer: Allen A. Jones

Year: 1982/Album: *Propositions*

Label: Mercury Memorable line:

"No matter how hard we try to fight it, when the need arises, baby, it's time to let go."

For all their great up-tempo material, the Bar-Kays were masters at what I call "trying to get some tonight" slow jams. I was in 5th grade when this came out and I liked it *instantly*. To me, this is what a slow jam is supposed to feel and sound like. The only thing that could possibly make "Anticipation" better would be if it was a little slower, but I always adjust the pitch control to change that. The track includes some great guitar work by Michael Toles, who had been a member of the band prior to their joining Mercury Records in 1976. The Bar-Kays' best ballad overall and a lock for my 500.

#465 Pass the Lovin' Brownstone

Writers: Nichole Gilbert, Darin Whittington, Charmayne Maxwell

Producer: Ken Kessie

Year: 1994/Album: From the Bottom Up

Label: MJJ/Epic Memorable line:

"We'll go from A to B to C and then we'll jump to Q. I'll blow your mind with all the nasty things I'm gonna do. Hey!"



Long before she was an R&B Diva of Atlanta, Nicci Gilbert was the lead singer, main songwriter, and overall driving force behind the group Brownstone.

Although it went Platinum, their debut *From the Bottom Up* was still very underrated, and this is the first of three songs from it on my 500. Unlike many of their female contemporaries, Nicci, Charmayne "Maxee" Maxwell, and Monica "Mi Mi" Doby wrote or co-wrote most of their own material. That made their songs feel more like true expressions of everything a woman could be or feel; especially a Black woman (an important education for a 21-year-old man like myself at the time). This was actually their first single, and it was released about five months before the album. While it's a funky expression of hip-hop flavored feminism, "Pass the Lovin" was not a hit upon release. I've always thought it might've been a hit if it had been their third single after the two big hits "If You Love Me" and "Grapevyne" instead of their introduction to the public.

#464 King of the Night Time World Kiss

Writers: Paul Stanley, Kim Fowley, Mark Anthony, Bob Ezrin
Producer: Bob Ezrin
Year: 1976/Album: Destroyer
Label: Casablanca
Memorable line:
"I'm the king of the night time world,
and you're my headlight queen!"

Kiss is one of my favorite hard rock bands, and this is the first of 8 cuts from their catalog on my 500. Like most of their songs, I discovered "King of the Night Time World" in early 1999. It struck a nerve with me right away. Why? Because after getting a place near downtown Chicago with a view of Sears Tower, hosting a hot radio show, and being paid to host the city's hottest

party, I felt like what the title says every Saturday night, and some other nights too. Overall, life was just damn good. I was happy, and I had earned that happiness through years of hard work. Many exciting people I met around that time helped contribute to that feeling; a feeling I still get whenever I hear this song.

#463 Let Your Feelings Show Earth, Wind & Fire

Writers: Maurice White, David Foster, Allee Willis
Producer: Maurice White
Year: 1979/Album: I Am
Label: American Recording Company/Columbia
Memorable line:
"If you care, you must dare, to be free, as the air."

It's often labeled "too pop" or "too disco", but 1979's I Am is easily my favorite EWF album. It's not better than That's the Way of the Worldoor All 'N All, but where those classics bounce back & forth between fast and slow songs, I Am is non-stop kick-ass energy from start to finish. Even the classic ballad "After the Love is Gone" has a certain drive to it, and on the album it blends right into this up-tempo jam. The first part of the song is great, but then it breaks down at about 3:25 and kicks into a whole 'nother groove that takes it to an even higher level. That last two minutes or so is what gets it on my 500. "Let Your Feelings Show" is just one reason why "greatest hits" and "best of" packages aren't enough when it comes to this band.

#462 Flap Your Wings Nelly

Writers: Cornell Haynes, Pharrell Williams, Chad Hugo
Producers: The Neptunes
Year: 2004/Album: Sweat
Label: Universal
Memorable line:
"You take baby girl & I'mma take shorty
with the sweat drippin' all over her body!"

After two multi-platinum CDs in a row with mega-hits like "Hot In Herre", "Country Grammar", and "Dilemma" with Kelly Rowland, rapper Nelly was on a roll when this joint dropped in 2004. My first time hearing "Flap Your Wings" came when DJ Vince Adams played it at a party before anyone knew what it was. But I didn't truly get it until I saw an attractive female do the dance that went along with the song at a different club in downtown Chicago one night. Her version of the eagle dance was slower and sexier than the one performed by the girls in the official video, and I've appreciated "Flap Your Wings" ever since. She definitely got her eagle on, and got this Nelly cut a spot on my 500.

#461 How Time Flies The O'Jays

Writers: Kenneth Gamble, Leon Huff Producers: Kenneth Gamble, Leon Huff Year: 1975/Album: *Survival* Label: Philadelphia International Memorable line: "Watchin' the world go by."

The first of three songs in The MC 500 from my father's favorite group, and the first of two from my favorite album of theirs: 1975's *Survival*. It's also the first song on this All-Star Team about time; a subject that usually comes with deeper, reflective lyrics. "How Time Flies" has always spoken to me both lyrically & musically, but I didn't know group member William Powell (the light skinned one) sang the higher part on this until I saw footage of the O'Jays performing it on the TV show "Soul Train". They actually sang live over the track instead of lip syncing; showing off their true skills as artists. Unfortunately, Powell's time in this world came to an end when he died of cancer just two years after "How Time Flies" was released.

#460 What's On Tonight Montell Jordan

Writers: Donald DeGrate, Montell Jordan, J. E. Jones
Producer: DeVante Swing
Year: 1997/Album: More...
Label: Def Soul
Memorable line:
"I'm comin' over."

"This Is How We Do It" may be his signature song, but let's be honest, how many people who heard that Platinum selling club classic in 1995 thought the artist who sang it would be anything more than a "One Hit Wonder"? Subsequent releases like "Somethin' 4 Da Honeyz" and "Falling" were Gold singles, but this Gold seller is the hit that gave Montell Jordan a respectable career. It also helped launch him as a songwriter in that era, with the #1 for 14 weeks "Nobody's Supposed To Be Here" by Deborah Cox being one of his major achievements. As an artist, "What's On Tonight" is his best overall song to me, and it's always been a favorite. It also may be the best song DeVante Swing ever wrote or produced for someone else outside of his group Jodeci. Like "Femininity" by Eric Benét (#474 on my 500), this reminds me of the late Friday night/early Saturday mornings I spent in the studio during my first weekly on-air show on WGCI in Chicago, "The Afterset". "What's On Tonight" came out as a single right around the time I started hosting that show. Plus an attractive female I met at the station a few hours prior to me going on the air had the cassette single of this in her car when we got together a few days later. Many people often referred to the song by the "Memorable line" I chose, "I'm comin' over", instead of its actual title.

#459 Messenger of Wisdom Kool & the Gang

Writers: Khalis Bayyan, Kool & the Gang Producers: Kool & the Gang Year: 1997 (1974)/Album: *Kool Jazz* Label: Mercury

Thank God for CD bonus tracks. This instrumental was recorded as a tribute to the Nation of Islam's Honorable Elijah Muhammed in 1974 for the band's Light of Worlds album (which contains the classic "Summer Madness"). But due to the time restrictions of vinyl, this excellent piece of work didn't make that artistic triumph from the band. In 1997 it was included on the Gang's Kool Jazz compilation; which itself had originally been released on vinyl in 1973 (former WGCI co-worker Mike Love and I prefer to call the album Kool & the Jazz Gang due to the way it looks on the cover). "Messenger of Wisdom" starts off with the sounds of a thunderstorm, and then goes into a mellow instrumental that relaxes just as well as any calm rain. Robert "Kool" Bell, Khalis Bayyan (Kool's brother Ronald Bell), and late guitarist Claydes Smith all give standout performances. Even in a catalog full of classics, this lesser known gem stands as one of this great band's best.

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1994 radio show flyer

#458 Jefferson Ball Rick James

Writer: Rick James
Producers: Rick James, Art Stewart
Year: 1979/Album: Bustin' Out of L Seven
Label: Gordy/Motown
Memorable line:
"I've seen you each morning since you were a baby, and now, you're the queen of my heart."

Funk icon Rick James made some of the great party jams of the late '70s and early '80s. Cuts like "Give It to Me Baby", "You and I", and "Cold Blooded" were #1 R&B hits that continue to play to this day. Because his up-tempo funk was so strong, RJ rarely gets credit for making quality slow jams, but he had many (including the classic duets "Fire and Desire" and "Ebony Eyes" with Teena Marie and Smokey Robinson respectively). This one wasn't even a hit, but the use of the "18th century cotillion in England" sounding harp to start it off has always been cool to me. It re-enforces the theme of the title, and takes the song to another place in time aside from the one it was made in. I love that creativity, and I have to give props to guest musician Dorothy Ashby for playing it. Background singers Jackie Ruffin and Lisa Sarna also stand out on vocals. "Jefferson Ball" is the first of three Rick James songs on The MC 500. All three come from his second album; 1979's Bustin' Out of L Seven.

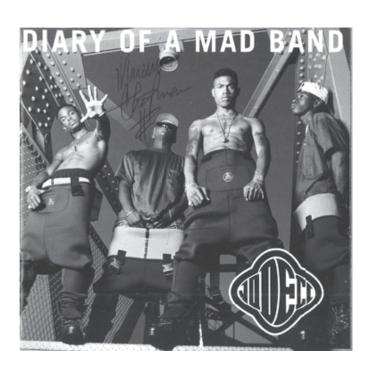
#457 Cookie Jar Parlet

Writer: Clarence "Fuzzy" Haskins
Producer: George Clinton
Year: 1978/Album: Pleasure Principle
Label: Casablanca
Memorable line:
"Ain't that lovin' you babe?"

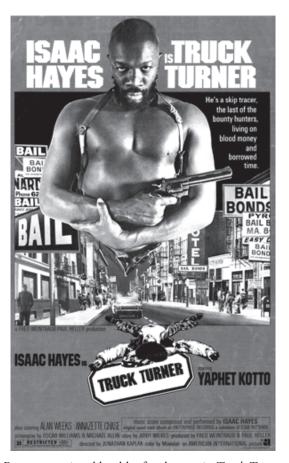
Parlet were three female members of Parliament-Funkadelic who were spun off into one of two separate girl groups from the camp (the other being The Brides of Funkenstein). The original lineup of Jeanette Washington, Debbie Wright, and the late Mallia Franklin made their debut during P-Funk's biggest year, 1978. "Cookie Jar" was first recorded by original Parliaments vocalist Fuzzy Haskins in 1976, but this version is better to me, especially the from the 3:30 point on. As nice as the girls are, the two most famous members of the P-Funk crew actually steal the spotlight from them on this cut; Bootsy Collins with the string slapping on his space bass guitar, and George Clinton with his background singing and talking. Clinton referring to himself as the Cookie Monster is priceless.

#456 What About Us Jodeci

Writer: Donald DeGrate Producer: DeVante Swing Year: 1994/Album: Diary of a Mad Band Label: Uptown/MCA Memorable line: "On and on and on to the breakadawn, it's on!"



Another great track from the second Jodeci CD, "What About Us" is a killen vocal performance from K-Ci & JoJo. Oddly enough, this is the group's only real hit single that didn't have a video. Just prior to the release of their third CD, they addressed the lack of promotion for Diary of a Mad Band in the cover story for Vibe magazine's August 1995 issue. Mr. Dalvin said that "Uptown didn't push it", while K-Ci stated that the band chose not to participate in any video after "Feenin" because the label "wasn't treating us like we'd just sold 3 million" copies of their debut album Forever My Lady. Everyone involved pointed to Jodeci becoming associated with Death Row Records label head Marion "Suge" Knight, and wanting out of the conflict of interest management contract they had with their label, as the possible reasons for Uptown not doing a video for this song. Regardless of that promotional slip-up from the record company, "What About Us" is easily one of the best cuts ever recorded by Jodeci, and it deservedly gets a spot on The MC 500.



Rare promotional booklet for the movie Truck Turner

#455 Blue's Crib Isaac Hayes

Writer: Isaac Hayes Producer: Isaac Hayes Year: 1974/Album: *Truck Turner* Label: Enterprise/Stax

Isaac Hayes is simply one of the greatest musical minds of all-time. Not only did he help write & produce some of the most memorable songs of the 1960s for acts like Sam & Dave, his innovative art of turning short pop tunes into extended combinations of soul, jazz, and funk on his own releases like Hot Buttered Soul, The Isaac Hayes Movement and To Be Continued changed African-Americans from single buyers to album buyers in the early 1970s. Hayes had already been a superstar solo artist for about five years when he starred in his first film, Three Tough Guys (which gave us the sample for the Geto Boys classic "Mind Playing Tricks on Me"). His next movie was Truck Turner; a funny action film that stands as my favorite Black movie of the 1970s. "Blue's Crib" is just one of the highlights from that film's awesome double album soundtrack. It wasn't a huge hit like his soundtrack for Shaft three years earlier, but overall Truck Turner is a better, more aggressive, and funkier album. The great guitar work (from either Charles Pitts or William Vaughn) on this track is enough to put it on my 500 song All-Star Team. The song that follows it on the album, "Driving in the Sun", is equally great. In the film, the character Blue (played by actor Yaphet Kotto) is a bad ass pimp looking to kill Isaac Hayes' character Truck Turner, thus the pimpish/gangsterish vibe of this instrumental track. I wish the song had been better utilized in the movie.

#454 Caribbean Festival (Disco Version) Kool & the Gang

Writers: Ronald Bell, Kool & the Gang Producers: Kool & the Gang Year: 1975 Label: De-Lite

Once again, thank God for CD bonus tracks. "Caribbean Festival" is the last cut on The Gang's *Spirit of the Boogie* album, and I'd been familiar with it since 1988. The album was originally released on CD in 1996, but when a record store in Chicago found the 2003 CD version for me in 2006 it had this "disco version" of "Festival" as a bonus track. It was originally only on the B-side to the single, and it really should've been the A-side. It starts off with a drum solo from "Funky" George Brown that immediately gives it much more energy than the album version. Everything else sounds better too; especially the guitar work from the late Claydes Smith. This disco version of "Caribbean Festival" is a kick-ass performance that's definitely worth checking out.

#453 Do You Wanna Ride? Adina Howard

Writers: Livio Harris, Doc Little, Ron Harris
Producers: Livio Harris, Doc Little
Year: 1995/Album: *Do You Wanna Ride?*Label: Mecca Don/EastWest
Memorable line:
"Now you can do me, do me, do me.
Nobody has to know my baby."

A sexy slow jam that deserved more exposure than it got. I was already feelin' this title track to Adina Howard's *Do You Wanna Ride?* CD; then I saw her perform it live in Chicago at the Clique nightclub in 1995 as the first song in a three song set (it was followed by "My Up and Down" and her big hit, #473 "Freak Like Me"). The singer and her dancers wore sexy black outfits and did flirtatious moves that included the straddling of chairs. It was an unforgettable performance that took "Do You Wanna Ride?" to a whole 'nother level, and netted the song a spot on my musical All-Star Team. The sample of male R&B group H-Town's 1994 hit "Part Time Lover" from the *Above the Rim* soundtrack, and Adina's own vocal ad-libs towards the end, both make this a standout cut from a solid debut album.

#452 Life Can Be Happy Slave

Writers: Mark Adams, Carter Bradley, Tim Dozier,

Mark Hicks, Tom Lockett, Floyd Miller, Ray Turner, Steve Washington, Danny Webster, Orion Wilhoite Producer: Jeff Dixon
Year: 1977/Album: *The Hardness of the World*Label: Cotillion/Atlantic
Memorable line:
"It's how you play the game that is the key."

One of the great funk bands to come out of Dayton, Ohio in the '70s, from 1977 through about 1982 Slave was known for hardcore party jams. While a couple of those made my All-Star Team, their first appearance in the 500 shows a more thought provoking side. The lead-off track from their underrated second album, *The Hardness of the World*, "Life Can Be Happy" is a good example of why hit singles were only teasers from most funk bands because their albums showed the full scope of their visions and talent. An inspirational yet overlooked track in the Slave catalog, and a song that helped get me through some tough times when I lived in Atlanta between 2008 and 2012.

#451 I'll Take Your Man Salt 'N Pepa

Writer: Herbie Azor Producer: Herbie Azor Year: 1986/Album: *Hot, Cool & Vicious* Label: Next Plateau

Memorable line:

"Get out my face, before I smack you Ho!"

The first time I turned to the Saturday afternoon rap show on Chicago's 88.5 FM WHPK in August 1986 was like stepping into a whole new world that changed *everything*. I heard several underground singles by artists who would soon become legends, and this was easily one of the most memorable. Two sassy, aggressive girls rapping about what they would and could do to take another chick's guy was unheard of back then. I had no idea what Salt 'N Pepa looked like, but they sounded pretty convincing, and I later found out they looked good enough to back up everything they were saying. Most people weren't aware of it at the time, but I knew a musical revolution was coming real soon, and I'm glad I experienced it firsthand. Ironically, "I'll Take Your Man", and most of Salt 'N Pepa's other material in their late '80s/early '90s heyday, was written by a man. Props to Herbie Azor for his contributions to one of the greatest acts in the history of the hip-hop genre.



With Pepa, Salt, and DJ Spinderella in 1997

#450 (Let Me Put) Love on Your Mind Con Funk Shun

Writer: Felton Pilate
Producers: Skip Scarborough and Con Funk Shun
Year: 1979/Album: Candy
Label: Mercury
Memorable line:
"Don't you think it's time you tried to find
someone to fulfill your needs?"

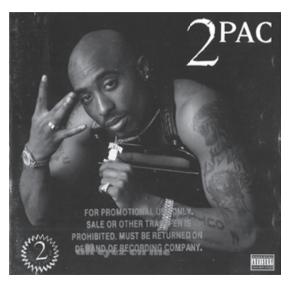
An awesome slow jam that doesn't really get that much play. "(Let Me Put) Love on Your Mind" was the second single from Con Funk Shun's fourth,

66 The Coolest Music Book Ever Made aka The MC 500 Vol. 1 500 to 401 67

best, and funkiest album, *Candy*, and the first of three songs from it to make my 500. Aside from the Isley Brothers, this is one of the rare funk or R&B ballads to feature a lead guitar throughout the song; and great guitar work at that. While it doesn't get the acclaim of other Con Funk Shun ballads like the classics "Love's Train" and "Straight From the Heart", "(Let Me Put) Love on Your Mind" is the one that gets a spot on my musical All-Star Team.



Con Funk Shun *Candy* album signed by band members Michael Cooper, Felton Pilate, and Karl Fuller



2Pac All Eyez On Me CD with promotional stamp

#449 Check Out Time 2Pac featuring Kurupt & Syke

Writers: Tupac Shakur, Johnny Jackson,
Tiruss Himes, Ricardo Brown
Producer: Johnny "J", 2Pac
Year: 1996/Album: *All Eyez On Me*Label: Death Row/Interscope
Memorable line:
"We gotta go."

I've always loved "lifestyle songs". Artists are on the road as a way of life, and you can literally picture these cats rushing to get their things so they can

check out of their hotel on time after a long night of partying. "Check Out Time" was the third song to flip the beat from Minnie Riperton's 1975 track "Baby, This Love I Have". It was first made famous in A Tribe Called Quest's classic "Check the Rhime" five years earlier, and was used again for R&B group Soul For Real's #1 hit "Candy Rain" in 1995. Despite the familiarity, the track still sounded fresh due to some slight tweaking by producer Johnny J. The singing on the hook was provided by Natasha Walker; a member of the R&B group Y?N-Vee who sang on several other 2Pac tracks. This is the first of 8 Pac songs on my 500; 5 of which come from his classic double disc *All Eyez on Me*.

#448 It Only Takes a Minute Tayares

Writers: Dennis Lambert, Brian Potter
Producers: Dennis Lambert, Brian Potter
Year: 1975/Album: *In the City*Label: Capitol
Memorable line:
"When you wanna fry yourself an egg!"

A stand up vocal group made up of five brothers, Tavares is one of those acts from the 1970s that definitely qualify as "unsung". They were consistent hit makers throughout that decade, and even scored a few hits in the early '80s, yet they're rarely mentioned with the best R&B stars of their era. I'd attribute this to the fact that despite strong material like "Heaven Must Be Missing An Angel", "Never Had a Love Like This Before", "Check It Out", and "Madame Butterfly", Tavares never had an album that sold in the Gold or Platinum range. "It Only Takes a Minute" was one of three #1 R&B hits for the group,

as well as a #10 Pop/#2 Disco hit, and one of my early childhood favorites. But as a kid I wasn't sure if they were saying "it only takes a minute girl!" or "it only takes a miracle!" Although I was wrong, I still like "miracle" better, and who sings about frying an egg? One of several "only in the '70s" songs to make the 500, this dance classic also made it into the Chicago House music scene of the 1980s.

#447 Hydra Grover Washington, Jr.

Writer: Grover Washington, Jr.
Producer: Creed Taylor
Year: 1975/Album: Feels So Good
Label: Kudu/Motown

Grover on sax + Louis Johnson from the Brothers Johnson on bass + a Bob James arrangement = a funky instrumental that's been sampled several times. The album it came from, *Feels So Good*, reached #1 not just for jazz, but on the R&B chart as well. It was also named the #2 jazz album of 1976 in *Billboard* magazine. A staple of my parents' record collection, "Hydra" is one of the funkiest cuts on one of the best albums of the mid-'70s jazz-funk era. Also check out the awesome gangsta joint "Knucklehead".

#446 Gz Up, Hoes Down Snoop Doggy Dogg

Writers: Calvin Broadus,
Andre Young, Delmar Arnaud
Producer: Dr. Dre
Year: 1993/Album: *Doggystyle*Label: Death Row/Interscope
Memorable line:
"Ni**az always handcuffin' they hoes
when a ni**a like me walk in the place."

This song has an interesting history. My Nupe from Long Beach, David Mitchell, had a tape with the original version of it before the CD was released. Snoop sang a hook on the song that said "Gz up, hoes down, if the b***h can't swim then she bound to drown"; which was a line from "The Chronic (Intro)" on Dr. Dre's album. Most people on our college campus who heard it thought it was good, but I didn't think much of it. Apparently Dr. Dre didn't care for it either, because it was replaced by the version on Snoop's debut album <code>Doggystyle</code> with a completely different track and a new hook sung by a male vocalist named Hug. The track sampled Isaac Hayes' version of "The Look of Love", but supposedly they didn't get clearance for it beforehand, thus this song was removed from later copies of Snoop's album. People who didn't get <code>Doggystyle</code> when it first came out think "Gz Up, Hoes Down" was never on there in the first place, but trust me, it was. Snoop has even claimed it was never on the CD. Too much chronic smoke maybe?

#445 Please Don't Go Boyz II Men

Writer: Nathan Morris Producer: Dallas Austin Year: 1991-92/Album: *Cooleyhighharmony*

Label: Motown

I never really liked these dudes. I've said so on the radio, and even passed on a chance to meet them in 2000 when they came to the station I was working at (I've never been phony, so I wasn't about to be smiling & shaking their hands knowing I didn't like them). Sure Boyz II Men were great singers, and they had some HUGE hits, but the first time I saw their debut video "Motownphilly" in summer '91 they looked like a bunch of goofies to me, and I immediately tuned them out. The dude with the deep voice used to say some of the sappiest lines I've ever heard in music (especially on "End of the Road"), and overall they were just way too wimpy for me. The TV show "In Living Color" even did a parody of them because of how wimpy they were, so it wasn't just me.

In summer '92 I got my first car, and after about a month, the tape deck broke. I drove around for a month or so after that just listening to the radio until I got a pull out tape deck for my ride (remember those things?). There were 3 or 4 songs that really stood out to me at that time, and "Please Don't Go" was one of them. I still didn't care for the group, but I wasn't going to deny how much I enjoyed this song. No need to start now.

NOTE: The *Cooleyhighharmony* album won a Grammy Award for Best R&B Performance by a Duo or Vocal Group.

#444 Get Retarded MC EZ & Troup

Writer: Craig Mack
Producers: Craig Mack, Teddy Lee
Year: 1988
Label: Fresh Records

If I didn't grow up exactly where I did in Chicago, and hadn't been able to pick up Hyde Park's college station WHPK, there are *many* songs I never would've heard, and this is one of them. MC EZ became better known as Craig Mack when he dropped the classic "Flava In Ya Ear" in 1994, but "Get Retarded" makes my 500 for the track, not the lyrics. I didn't find out what the sample was until 2012, thus I never understood that they were saying "one man band plays all alone". It's by jazz saxophonist Monk Higgins featuring a female singing group called the Specialties (and itself is a remake of a Thom Bell produced Philly soul jam by singer Ronnie Dyson). Underground, headnodding, golden era hip-hop at its finest.

#443 Romeo and the Lonely Girl Thin Lizzy

Writer: Phil Lynott
Producer: John Alcock
Year: 1976/Album: Jailbreak
Label: Vertigo/Mercury
Memorable line:
"Never judge lovers by good lookin' covers,
the lover might be spurned."
and
"But in the end even Romeo found,
on no one could he depend."

Thin Lizzy were a hard rock band led by half Black/half Irish bass player, vocalist, and poet Phil Lynott. He's considered by many to be *the* greatest lyricist in hard rock history, and this poetic piece from his band's best album is a great example of his work. It's also a great showcase for the twin guitar attack of Scott Gorham and Brian Robertson, while Brian Downey gives a solid performance on drums. Unfortunately, Phil Lynott died ten years after "Romeo and the Lonely Girl" was released, but it's the first of four songs from his band on my 500.

#442 The Illest Brother Gang Starr

Writers: Keith Elam, Christopher Martin Producers: DJ Premiere & The GURU Year: 1992/Album: *Daily Operation* Label: Chrysalis

Memorable line: "I'm like an avalanche of knowledge pounding down all fools."

The late Keith Elam aka Guru was a great MC, but this cut is all about DJ Premier for me. The piano & horn sample that goes throughout this song is infectious, and it amazingly comes from Bill Cosby's cover of the Lee Dorsey classic "Get Out of My Life, Woman". The use of another comedy album sample at the end, Richard Pryor's "When Your Woman Leaves You" from *Is It Something I Said?*, makes "The Illest Brother" even better. A somewhat forgotten cut that stands as my favorite Gang Starr joint.

#441

Recognize Warren G featuring The Twinz

Writers: Warren Griffin, Deon Williams, Dewayne Williams
Producer: Warren G
Year: 1994/Album: Regulate...G Funk Era
Label: Violator/Rush Associated Labels
Memorable line:
"The place is here, the time is right,
for the Twinz and Warren G to rip sh*t tonight."

After Dr. Dre's *The Chronic*, Snoop's *Doggystyle*, and the *Above the Rim* soundtrack, the west coast G-funk sound RULED hip-hop in summer '94. Warren G certainly played a role in its popularity, and his solo release, *Regulate...G Funk Era*, came along at just the right time. Despite selling over 3 million copies, how good his CD was from a hip-hop perspective has always been debated by fans of the genre. But from a Funk perspective, Warren G was right on the money, and this was the funkiest song on the album. Plus the bass guitar is my favorite instrument, and the performance given by bass player Daniel Shulman on "Recognize" is worth recognizing (pun intended). Sean "Barney" Thomas also stands out on keyboards. A laid back funk track that I can listen to over & over again.

#440 Searching to Find the One Unlimited Touch

Writers: Lenny Underwood, Samuel Anderson,
Raymond Reid, Bert Reid
Producers: William Anderson, Raymond Reid, Bert Reid
Year: 1981/Album: *Unlimited Touch*Label: Prelude
Memorable line:
"Gotta keep on, gotta be strong when you're searching, searching to find the one!"

Unlimited Touch was a dance band from Brooklyn with four male musicians and two female vocalists who were produced by members of another New York City dance band represented in my 500; Crown Heights Affair. This group had two hit singles: their debut "I Hear Music in the Streets", and this one. Both songs are great, but "Searching to Find the One" makes my All-Star Team because as a kid I was always excited to hear it, and I've never gotten tired of it. Lyrics about searching for love usually go with slow songs, but putting those types of lyrics with fast dance music worked very well here.

There were two different versions of "Searching" released on album: one that lasts about 5 minutes and another that's over 7 minutes. Prelude Records issued copies of the *Unlimited Touch* album with one or the other, and I happen to have one of each. If you're a vinyl collector, search to find a copy of the one you don't already own. There's a catch to it though; the vinyl label gives the time as 5:03 on both versions, so you have to look at the width of the groove to tell if it's the longer one.

#439 Dr. Feelgood Motley Crue

Writers: Nikki Sixx, Mick Mars
Producer: Bob Rock
Year: 1989/Album: *Dr. Feelgood*Label: Elektra
Memorable line:
"He's gonna be your Frankenstein!"

I like songs that kick ass, and this one does just that. The vocal performance from lead singer Vince Neil is good, but the bass from Nikki Sixx, drums from Tommy Lee, and guitar from Mick Mars are absolutely *sick*; especially on the intro. "Dr. Feelgood" is about trying to kick a drug habit, which the band members were able to do prior to making this title track to their best album. A hard rock/heavy metal classic that smokes from start to finish, this is the first of two Motley Crue cuts to make The MC 500.

#438 Verses From the Abstract A Tribe Called Quest

Writer: Jonathan Davis
Producers: A Tribe Called Quest
Year: 1991
Album: *The Low End Theory*Label: Jive
Memorable line:
"Come into the house of the jazz
of the funk of the rhythm."



The Low End Theory CD with rare promotional sticker

A great re-working of "The Star of a Story" by Heatwave with vocals by Vinia Mojica, and live bass playing by jazz legend Ron Carter. Though I was satisfied

with their choice of "Jazz (We've Got)", I really wanted Tribe to drop this as the second single from their classic *The Low End Theory*. "Verses From the Abstract" is just one example of why that album was a landmark in hip-hop, and THE greatest fusion of hip-hop & jazz ever made, bar none. Another cut from that release, "Vibes 'n Stuff", just missed the 500.

#437 Big Daddy vs. Dolemite Big Daddy Kane featuring Rudy Ray Moore

Writers: Antonio Hardy, Rudy Ray Moore
Producer: Big Daddy Kane
Year: 1990/Album: *Taste of Chocolate*Label: Cold Chillin'/Warner Bros.
Memorable line:
"It was so shiny it looked like it was painted.
The ho took one look and damn near fainted!"

Chicago's house music scene exposed me to the world of Rudy Ray Moore through his associate Lady Reed aka "Sensuous Black Woman", but this is the track that introduced me to the Man himself. Moore aka "Dolemite" dropped gems from several of his '70s comedy albums on this, and they quickly became part of my regular conversation as a freshman in college with my boys like Marlon Davis and Tommy Thompson. Even at the height of his popularity, the great Big Daddy Kane was no match for the original Godfather of x-rated comedy rap. A hilarious classic of Black man braggadocio.

80 The Coolest Music Book Ever Made aka The MC 500 Vol. 1



With Rudy Ray Moore aka Dolemite. Dec. 1, 2007 Photo by Russell Barnes

#436 Take On Me A-Ha

Writers: Magne Furuholmen, Morten Harket, Pal Waaktaar Producer: Alan Tarney Year: 1985/Album: *Hunting High and Low* Label: Warner Bros.

Most people have no idea I used to draw when I was a kid. In fact, I sold a picture I drew to a lady when I was about 9, and had another drawing in

Chicago's Art Institute. As a result, I've always appreciated the effort that had to be put into making the video for this song. While it was easily one of the best of its era, the video would've meant a lot less if the song itself wasn't great. Whenever I hear "Take On Me" on the radio I always turn the volume up. Dude was killing it with the high notes. A classic that defines both mid-'80s pop, and MTV at the height of its power as an actual music channel.

#435 Puet Etre...Pas Liaisons Dangereuses

Writers: Beate Bartel, Chris Haas, Krishna Goineau Producers: Beate Bartel, Chris Haas Year: 1981 Album: *Liaisons Dangereuses*

Label: TIS

In summer 1983 my cousins John, George, and Wendy introduced me to "the mixes" that aired on Chicago station WBMX. One song that we liked was called "Los Niños del Parque" and it was by this group. But it was this other song they made (which we simply called "The Other One") that went beyond the '83-early '84 mixes and into the actual House music scene (whether or not the other music we heard in the early mixes was actually House is a debate that still goes on to this day. I say it wasn't). I still have no idea what they're saying, but "Puet Etre...Pas" is a defining song from that era, and one of the few jams on my 500 that I don't actually own in my collection. I thought I was buying it back in '83, but my purchase was actually an EP that included "Los Niños del Parque" and three other songs from the band, not this one. Both the EP and the album contain the same cover photo, with the difference

being a black border on the EP while the *Liaisons Dangereuses* LP is white. "Puet Etre...Pas" is only on the full length album, and it's pretty hard to find.

#434 They Want EFX Das EFX

Writers: Andre Weston, William Hines,
Charles Bobbitt, James Brown, Fred Wesley
Producers: Andre Weston, William Hines
Year: 1992/Album: *Dead Serious*Label: East West
Memorable line:
"I takes my two scoops with fruit loops
and make it a double-decker!"

Mix a James Brown instrumental from 1973's *Black Caesar* soundtrack with a line from Boogie Down Productions' 1990 song "Breath Control II", plus two dudes who obviously watched *a lot* of TV, and you get what might've been the best rap song of 1992. I still remember going to the Evergreen Plaza shopping mall with my boys Benny Williams and "Shady Pete" Williams and getting the Das EFX tape when it first came out. When this song finished playing, we simultaneously said "Bad!" Then Pete hit rewind and played it again. Another Das song from that album ranked even higher on my 500, but "They Want EFX" is their true classic.

#433 Wipe Me Down (Remix) Lil Boosie featuring Foxx & Webbie

Writers: Torrence Hatch,
Webster Gradney, Jonathan Reed
Producer: Mouse On Tha Track
Year: 2007
Album: Trill Entertainment Presents:
Survival of the Fittest
Label: Trill Entertainment
Memorable line:
"All of 'em tryin' to steal my underwear!"

One of *the* club classics of the 2000s, and one of my absolute favorite party jams, "Wipe Me Down" is a fun song that I doubt if I'll ever get tired of. Even those who don't care much for Southern hip-hop would have a hard time denying the good time feel of this joint. Lil' Boosie and his boys brought enjoyment with this in 2007 the same way Bootsy Collins and his Rubber Band did with their great music in 1977. The playful energy of songs like "Wipe Me Down" help keep my spirit young.

#432 Tidal Wave Ronnie Laws

Writer: William Jeffrey Producer: Wayne Henderson Year: 1975/Album: *Pressure Sensitive* Label: Blue Note

The sample for Black Moon's 1993 hip-hop classic "Who Got the Props", "Tidal Wave" is a great song in its own right. The Crusaders' Wayne Henderson and Wilton Felder produced and played bass on it respectively, proving the greatness of that band even when they weren't making their own records. The artist here was saxophonist Ronnie Laws, and while his playing was great, props also have to go to Jerry Peters for his string ensemble and piano work; especially since that's what got used in "Who Got the Props". The coolest song on a nice jazz-funk album, "Tidal Wave" is definitely a cut worth checking out regardless of your musical taste.

NOTE: "Karmen", a mellow track from Laws' sophomore album *Fever*l that features the rhythm section from the band Pleasure, is another great tune that just missed making The MC 500.

#431 Girls L.G.B.N.A.F.

Writer: Tracy Morrow
Producers: Ice-T and Afrika Islam
Year: 1988/Album: *Power*Label: Sire/Warner Bros.
Memorable line:
"You say you don't, but I know you do."

In hip-hop's legendary summer of 1988 I had the pleasure of hearing this performed live at the first concert I ever went to; *before* it was actually released. My cousin Lashundra let me roll with her and her friends to Chicago's UIC Pavilion to see Eric B. & Rakim, Doug E. Fresh, Kool Moe Dee, Boogie Down Productions, and Biz Markie. The lead-off hitter on that All-Star rap show was Ice-T. When he performed the song "Sex" from his first album *Rhyme Pays*, he stopped about half way through it to say that it wasn't nasty enough. Then he launched into this new song that none of us had heard from his forthcoming album *Power*; an album that's remembered as much for the girl on its cover (Ice-T's girlfriend at the time, Darlene Ortiz) as it is for its music. "Girls L.G.B.N.A.F." had a *killer* beat, and everyone in the audience loved it, especially the girls. Their reaction to this song made an impact on me, and it quickly became a favorite. A decade after hearing it I was talking over the instrumental track on my radio shows as a subliminal message to female listeners.

#430 Good Beat (Shake Your Body to the Beat Mix) Dece-Lite

Writers: Dmitry Brill,
Kierin Kirby, Dong-hwa Chung
Producers: Deee-Lite
Year: 1991
Label: Elektra
Memorable line:
I just wanna give a good beat!"

In fall 1991, me and my boys Dave Mitchell, Emmanuel Barr, and several others in our college dorm used to see this bad little Hispanic chick come in the cafeteria sometimes. When we did, we'd say "Mexican hottie!" like they say "Shake your body!" on this song. Then, the way they say "I just wanna...I just wanna...I just wanna give a good beat!" we would say "I just want a...I just want a...I just want a...a burrito supreme-preme-preme!" We were silly, but hey, that's part of what being in college is about. "Good Beat" was also a staple of the parties we attended on campus at that time, and it doesn't surprise me that the song reached #1 on the Billboard Dance chart. Deee-Lite will always be best known for their first single; the classic "Groove Is in the Heart". But while "Groove" had the presence of P-Funk's Bootsy Collins in its video, this version of "Good Beat" had something extra that gets it on The MC 500 instead of its more famous predecessor...the Mexican hottie!

#429

Hit U From the Back Rick Ross featuring Rodney

Writers: William Roberts, Andrew Harr,
Jermaine Jackson, Rodney Kohn,
Nile Rodgers, Bernard Edwards
Producers: The Runners
Year: 2006/Album: *Port of Miami*Label: Slip N' Slide/Def Jam
Memorable line:
"I love to get brain. Girl I wanna learn!"

The 2006 debut single from rapper Rick Ross, "Hustlin", was a street anthem that became an instant classic. The follow-up single "Push It" was also a hit, and the two songs helped push Ross' *Port of Miami* CD to the #1 spot on both the Hip-Hop/R&B and Pop albums charts in *Billboard* magazine. But as successful as those two hits were, it's this *Port of Miami* album track that earns Rick Ross the first of his two spots on The MC 500.

"Hit U From the Back" starts off with some sped up dialogue that sounds like it was lifted straight out of a bad '70s pimp movie. The music underneath the talking comes from "Savoir Faire" by the group Chic (#406 in the 500), but the track changes to a different groove for the hook and verses to flow over. While Ross kicks some cool rhymes, the male singer simply credited as Rodney steals the show with his vocals. The infectious hook he performs makes it easy for any guy to adopt "Hit U From the Back" as a personal anthem; especially a guy with powerful skills in that position. Its inclusion on this 500 song All-Star Team is a testament to that idea.

#428 Fire Ohio Players

Writers: James Williams, William Beck,
Marshall Jones, Leroy Bonner, Marvin Pierce,
Ralph Middlebrooks, Clarence Satchell
Producers: Ohio Players
Year: 1974-75/Album: Fire
Label: Mercury
Memorable line:

"I'm 'bout to choke from the smoke got to tighten up my stroke!"

At age 15 I won \$103 for the second time from a new radio station in Chicago (V103) for identifying this song played backwards (I'd previously won for identifying "People Make the World Go Round" by the Stylistics). "Fire" is a classic that includes a moving bass line from Marshall Jones; tight horns from Marvin "Merv" Pierce, Ralph "Pee Wee" Middlebrooks, and band leader Clarence "Satch" Satchell; and standout high pitched vocals from keyboard player Billy Beck and drummer James "Diamond" Williams. The song was funky enough to top the Billboard R&B Singles chart in early 1975, but it also had enough great guitar playing from Leroy "Sugarfoot" Bonner for rock fans to send it to #1 on the Pop charts too. "Fire" is the first of six songs in The MC 500 from the Ohio Players; the coolest band of all-time and definitely one of my Top 5 favorites. The covers of my *Sex Time And Radio* books were designed to look like their album covers.

#427 Fantastic Voyage Lakeside

Writers: Fred Alexander, Jr., Norman Beavers, Marvin Craig, Tiemeyer McCain, Thomas Shelby, Stephen Shockley, Otis Stokes, Mark A. Wood, Jr. Producers: Lakeside Year: 1980-81/Album: *Fantastic Voyage*

Label: Solar
Memorable line:
Too many to choose one



I'm sure the members of Lakeside were very happy when Tom Joyner named his cruise after their signature song. And while I'm happy for the exposure it's given them, it's almost made people forget that they had more hits in their catalog besides "Fantastic Voyage". As a result, this classic almost didn't even make my 500; until I remembered just how much I loved it as a kid. In fact, the *Fantastic Voyage* album cover is still one of my favorites, and it damn near guaranteed the song a spot in this book by itself. This was also one of the very

first examples (if not *the* first) of modern day rapping being used by popular artists outside of the hip-hop genre. A number 1 R&B hit that pushed the album to number 2 R&B and Gold status, "Fantastic Voyage" is the first of two songs from Lakeside to make The MC 500.

#426 She Goes Down Motley Crue

Writers: Mick Mars, Nikki Sixx
Producer: Bob Rock
Year: 1989/Album: *Dr. Feelgood*Label: Elektra
Memorable line:
"Flat on my back she goes down."

In the wake of "Just Don't Bite It" and "She Swallowed It" by NWA, "Freak Me" by Silk, and "Downtown" by SWV, the subject of oral sex was out in the open by 1993. But I wasn't aware of this 1989 fellatio cut from heavy metal rockers Motley Crue, so when I heard one of my white college roommates playing it in '93, I said "what did they just say?!" He then confirmed that lead singer Vince Neil and a bevy of background singers were saying exactly what I thought they were saying. "She Goes Down" has been a favorite ever since. The sound effect of a zipper in the beginning makes the band's intentions clear from the start.

#425 Heaven of My Life Change

Writers: Paolo Gianolio, David Romani,
Mauro Malavasi, Tanyayette Willoughby
Producers: Jacques Fred Petrus, Mauro Malavasi
Year: 1981/Album: *Miracles*Label: RFC/Atlantic
Memorable line:
"I'm so glad that you're the angel of my heart,
and I'm the love that you need."

Change was a studio group assembled in Italy by Jacques Fred Petrus and Mauro Malavasi; two disco producers who were obviously influenced by Bernard Edwards and Nile Rodgers of the band Chic. In fact, according to Daryl Easlea's book *Everybody Dance: Chic and the Politics of Disco*, "Petrus and Malavasi initially approached Rodgers and Edwards to produce them", but the Chic masterminds were too busy and declined. The first Change album, *The Glow of Love*, officially introduced the world to the first big hits from Luther Vandross (one of which comes up later in the 500). Luther only sang background on their second album, but he can be heard pretty prominently on this cut. While the vocals are excellent, the real star of the song is guitar player Paolo Gianolio. That Nile Rodgers/Chic styled axe line is perfect, and it's placement in the mix makes it the driving force of the whole track. How "Heaven of My Life" wasn't chosen as the second single from the Change *Miracles* album after their first hit "Paradise" is beyond me.

#424 Fruit of Life

Brownstone

Writers: Jorge Corante, Nichole Gilbert, Monica Doby
Producers: Jorge "G-Man" Corante, Nichole Gilbert
Year: 1995/Album: From the Bottom Up
Label: MJJ/Epic
Memorable line:
"Silence is beauty and music is love.
Happiness keeps you where sadness once was."

The second of three cuts from the first Brownstone CD to make my 500, "Fruit of Life" has great lyrics about enjoying life. The track itself has a very nice intro, and I love the series of drum machine hits just before the lyrics kick in. The music on the bridge borrows the bass line from the Marvin Gaye classic "Inner City Blues". Also check out the fast singing done by the girls toward the end. "Fruit of Life" is an overlooked masterpiece from one of the most complete R&B albums of the 1990s.



#423 Love Saw It Karyn White with Babyface

Writers: Antonio Reid, Kenneth Edmonds, Daryl Simmons
Producers: L.A. Reid, Babyface
Year: 1989/Album: Karyn White
Label: Warner Bros.
Memorable line:
"Love called my name. Love saw me change.
Love rescued me from the danger of pain."

I'm pretty sure I wasn't the only guy who took serious notice of this woman upon seeing her and her ample sized breasts bouncing around in the water during her first video for "The Way You Love Me". Her next single, "Superwoman", got more attention from the ladies. Not only did it become a female empowerment anthem, it was the #1 R&B hit of 1989. That may be Karyn White's signature song, but it's almost fitting that this combination of male and female energy became her third straight #1 hit, and is the song that gets her a spot on The MC 500. Both the music and vocals in "Love Saw It" contain a certain level of passion that connected with me, and I've always enjoyed it. I still can't believe they did a TV One "Life After" special about Karyn White with Babyface giving commentary, yet there was no mention of this duet they made together. Regardless of that misstep, this slice of late '80s R&B makes my musical All-Star Team.

#422 Sunshine Earth, Wind & Fire

Writers: Maurice White, Al McKay,
Philip Bailey, Larry Dunn
Producers: Maurice White, Charles Stepney
Year: 1975-76/Album: *Gratitude*Label: Columbia

In summer 1991, the Video Jukebox channel came to Chicago cable. One video for a rap song that always aired sampled the bass & guitar lines played by Verdine White and Al McKay on this song. Although I'd had Earth, Wind & Fire's *Gratitude* album since I was a kid, that rap jam by the group Triplex reminded me of just how good this track was. Most people describe *Gratitude* as having 3 sides that were recorded live in concert and side 4 having 4 new studio tracks. "Sunshine" is often forgotten because it was the only studio track that isn't on side 4 of the original LP. It was the last cut on side 3, which means there were actually 5 new studio cuts, not 4. Even the band members themselves often forget about poor little "Sunshine" when they describe the album. Not only is the guitar/bass line great, it's also one of their tracks with a lot of spirituality in the lyrics, making it sort of a gospel-funk song. A stellar performance by Philip Bailey on vocals with some nice horns toward the end.

#421 If Only Das EFX

Writers: Andre Weston, William Hines, Chris Charity,
Derek Lynch, Stanley Turrentine
Producers: Andre Weston, William Hines
Year: 1992/Album: *Dead Serious*

Label: East West Memorable line:

"I got more skills than John Han got cock."

My favorite joint from the first Das EFX album, "If Only" contains an *excellent* sample of the 1976 Stanley Turrentine jazz song "The Man With the Sad Face". Not surprisingly, my dad had that in his collection, and I found it in our basement around the same time I bought the Das EFX cassette. This was a cool song to roll down the street to in summer '92 and it still is to this day.

#420 Donk Soulja Boy Tell'em

Writer: DeAndre Way
Producer: DeAndre Way
Year: 2007-08
Album: souljaboytellem.com
Label: Stacks on Deck/Collipark
Memorable line:
"Hot tamale!"

Regardless of what anybody says, I always liked this lil' dude. Soulja Boy Tell'em helped revolutionize the way artists and labels get their music to the public by using social media. He started his own label as a teenager, and wrote & produced this club track that makes my 500. Plus any song that adds to the musical tradition of describing a woman's butt with a different word is alright with me; especially if it actually gets women to shake their asses at parties like this one always does. In a radio interview I heard in Atlanta, executive producer Mr. Collipark said he advised Soulja Boy that he needed a song that would sound good coming on after Beyoncé's hit "Get Me Bodied" at a club. Mission accomplished. A fun youthful song that works for youthful adults too.

#419 Burnin' For You Blue Oyster Cult

Writers: Donald Roeser, Richard Meltzer
Producer: Martin Birch
Year: 1981
Album: Fire of Unknown Origin
Label: Columbia
Memorable line:
"Time to play B-sides."

One of my favorite radio stations of all-time was 93.3 "The Bone"; a now defunct classic rock station in Dallas-Ft. Worth that I listened to a lot in 2002. I still recall a female air talent they had telling a story of how she called a guy she was into when this song was out and played it for him as a way of saying she was "burnin' for him". This band's song "Godzilla" almost made my 500 too, while their biggest hit, "(Don't Fear) The Reaper" is a classic rock staple.

#418 Beating Around the Bush AC/DC

Writers: Angus Young,
Malcolm Young, Bon Scott
Producer: Robert "Mutt" Lange
Year: 1979/Album: *Highway to Hell*Label: Atlantic

Two guitar playing brothers who stand about 5 ft. 3, one of whom wears a little kid's schoolboy outfit, and an equally short charismatic lead singer, adds up to a fun band that kicks major hard rock ass. "Beating Around the Bush" is the first of six songs by AC/DC on The MC 500. It's also the first of two songs on my All-Star Team from the album that made them musical heavyweights in America after experiencing success in their native Australia and other countries. The guitar solo at the end by Angus Young is absolutely ridiculous, while drummer Phil Rudd provides a great groove throughout.

#417 Easin' In Edwin Starr

Writer: Freddie Perren
Producers: Freddie Perren, Fonce Mizell
Year: 1973

Album: Hell Up in Harlem soundtrack

Label: Motown

His #1 pop hit "War" (what is it good for?!) from 1970 may be his signature song, but this track from the *Hell Up in Harlem* soundtrack is Edwin Starr's biggest funk and hip-hop legacy. Written and produced by Freddie Perren, along with one half of the jazz-funk legend Mizell brothers (in this case Fonce), "Easin' In" is one of the most sampled songs from the '80s & '90s. Special props go to Joe Clayton for his work on congas, and the bass playing of James Jamerson (Chuck Rainey and Jim Hughart are also listed in the album credits, which are not broken down by song). Some pimped out gangsta sheet that was under-utilized in the film it was written for.

#416 Africano Earth, Wind & Fire

Writers: Maurice White, Larry Dunn Producer: Maurice White with Charles Stepney Year: 1975

Album: *That's the Way of the World*Label: Columbia

Possibly the best instrumental this great band ever made, "Africano" was the first one recorded by the classic Earth, Wind & Fire lineup of Maurice White, Verdine White, Philip Bailey, Larry Dunn, Al McKay, Ralph Johnson, Johnny Graham, Andrew Woolfolk, and their newest recruit in 1975, Maurice & Verdine's younger brother Fred White. This track also would've been a cool theme song for a TV show or film. Since the album it came from was actually the soundtrack to a film, "Africano" may have been recorded specifically for the movie. Ironically, it's the only song from the album that *isn't* heard in the film. Andrew Woolfolk gave an excellent performance on saxophone, while Maurice White's decision to not label the *That's the Way of the World* album a soundtrack turned out to be a genius non-move since the film was a flop. Also check out the live version of "Africano" on the *Gratitude* album where it was combined in a medley with an earlier EWF instrumental called "Power".

#415 Your Secret Love Luther Vandross

Writers: Luther Vandross, Reed Vertelney
Producer: Luther Vandross
Year: 1996/Album: Your Secret Love
Label: Epic
Memorable line:
"It's a shame it has to be like this,
but I really miss you baby!"

I was the engineer/producer for the late night slow jam show "Whispers in the Dark" on WGCI in Chicago when this first came out. I still remember playing the station drop over the intro of "Your Secret Love" that said "107-5 WGCI we play the hits, here's a new one! W-G-C-I!" I always liked the way Luther said "SE-cret" on this, and the music was the perfect tempo. Funny how he described this situation in a classy sounding way (secret love) while people of today make it sound degrading (side piece).

#414 Jingling Baby (Remixed and Still Jingling) LL Cool J

Writers: James Todd Smith,
Dwayne Simon, Brian Latture
Producer: LL Cool J
Year: 1990

Album: *Mama Said Knock You Out*Label: Def Jam/Columbia
Memorable line:

"Pass the wine cooler you big black..."

So-called "hip-hop experts" will tell you LL's comeback after his missteps of 1989 started with the fall 1990 album *Mama Said Knock You Out*. True hip-hop experts of that era know his comeback started much earlier that year with this Marley Marl remix single and its B-side "Illegal Search". The original "Jingling Baby" from the 1989 album *Walking With a Panther* was somewhat forgettable. Everything about this baby was on point. The sample of "Walking into Sunshine" by the group Central Line, LL's more relaxed delivery, and the great house party themed video all got Cool J back on track. The part in the video where he's standing in the kitchen with the cookie in his hand saying "go 'head baby" is still funny to me (or was that a chicken McNugget?)

NOTE: the song's sub-title was slightly altered on the *Mama Said Knock You Out* album from "Remixed and Still Jingling" on the original single to "Remixed but Still Jingling".

#413 Black Frost Grover Washington, Jr.

Writers: Grover Washington, Jr., Bob James Producer: Creed Taylor Year: 1975/Album: *Mister Magic* Label: Kudu/Motown

I have to thank my parents for this one. Since this came directly after the classic title track on the *Mister Magid* album, "Black Frost" was a much played staple in our basement at home. It also became a much sampled track when '70s jazz/funk made its way into hip-hop. It features some great sax playing from Grover, while Bob James also stands out as arranger, conductor, and co-writer. Some more fly gangsta sheet.

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1994 radio show flyer

#412 Earth, Wind & Fire Earth, Wind & Fire

Writers: Maurice White, Skip Scarborough Producers: Maurice White, Charles Stepney Year: 1976/Album: *Spirit* Label: Columbia Memorable line: "Can't you understand, you're but a grain of sand."

I always thought it was cool that this band made a song titled after itself. The song "Earth, Wind & Fire" is a thoughtful mid-tempo gem that's one more example of Earth, Wind & Fire's spirituality, and the first of three cuts on my 500 from their album *Spirit*. The original vinyl edition of that LP came with lyrics to each song. Interestingly enough, some of the lyrics printed on the inner sleeve aren't heard in the song, while some of those that are heard were switched around or altered. In fact, the running order of the songs listed on the back cover of the album's first pressing was also different from the actual order on the record; a clear indication that Columbia Records rush released the LP after the success of its first single a few months earlier (the #1 R&B hit "Getaway"). Band leader Maurice White handled the lead singing on "Earth, Wind & Fire", and he gave one of his best vocal performances.

#411

Ain't No Future In Yo' Frontin' MC Breed & DFC

Writers: Eric Breed, Herman Lang, Salomon Harris
Producers: MC Breed, Herman Lang, S. Harris
Year: 1991/Album: MC Breed & DFC
Label: Power Artists/SDEG/Ichiban
Memorable line:
"And when I get my jeep I'm puttin' Breed on the crome!"

In summer 1991 I wanted to be a Nupe...bad, and this is one of the songs that defines that era to me. I remember hearing it at parties and wishing I could start stepping and twirling a cane like the other members of Kappa Alpha Psi I saw, but knowing it wasn't my time yet. The beat to "Ain't No Future in Yo Frontin" was perfect for those fraternity activities, and when you look at its sampling DNA it's easy to tell why. The Ohio Players "Funky Worm" + Zapp "More Bounce to the Ounce"= one of the greatest funk sample-based hip-hop songs of all-time. The track also makes good use of Flavor Flav saying "to the beat y'all" from Public Enemy's "B Side Wins Again". RIP to MC Breed who passed away in 2008. This classic, along with his 1993 collaboration with 2Pac, "Gotta Get Mine", cements his place in hip-hop history.

#410 Ladies Room Kiss

Writer: Gene Simmons
Producer: Eddie Kramer
Year: 1976/Album: Rock and Roll Over
Label: Casablanca
Memorable line:
"You wanna show me your stuff, c'mon baby!"

From December 1998 through September 1999, just after 10pm on a Saturday night I would've been finishing a hot radio show on WGCI in Chicago with my partner Dr. Luv. Next up we would've been heading to the River West Brewery aka Club Sugar Hill to host the biggest African-American party in the city, and once inside, I would've definitely walked past the ladies bathroom. Since I was listening to and reading about rock stars of the 1970s at that time, particularly Kiss, I always thought about this song when I was at the club. Unlike writer & vocalist Gene Simmons, I didn't actually use the ladies room as a place for sex. I was, however, accused of using the VIP room a few feet away from it for that purpose. The accusation was due to what I'd call "a visual misunderstanding" where someone thought they saw something happening that wasn't really taking place. It led to me finding out that there was actually a different level in the club where I could have sex if I needed to; which added a whole new dimension to my Saturday nights at the time. But that's a whole 'nother story in another book (Sex Time And Radio Vol. 3: "The Cult of Personality' to be exact). As for "Ladies Room", it's another era defining song for me, and the first of four from the second Kiss album of 1976: Rock and Roll Over. Young male libido in full effect.

#409 Shoot to Thrill AC/DC

Writers: Angus Young,
Malcolm Young, Brian Johnson
Producer: Robert "Mutt" Lange
Year: 1980/Album: *Back in Black*Label: Atlantic
Memorable line:
"Too many women, too many pills!"

Want a great song to listen to while walking or running on a treadmill? Well look no further than this second track from AC/DC's legendary *Back in Black* album. In fact, the breakdown at 3:24, build back up at 4:18, and the "oh! oh!" part that starts at 4:32, all make "Shoot to Thrill" my pick for the greatest treadmill song of all time. Absolutely awesome.

#408 I'm Back Eminem

Writers: Marshall Mathers,
Andre Young, Melvin Bradford
Producers: Dr. Dre, Mel-Man
Year: 2000/Album: *The Marshall Mathers LP*Label: Aftermath/Interscope
Memorable line:
"And by the way, N'Sync, why do they sing?
Am I the only one who realizes they stink?"

His first CD put him on the map, but it was his second release, *The Marshall Mathers LP* in 2000, that truly established the legend of Eminem. This is the first of three songs from that classic CD to make my 500, and I could've easily chosen at least one more. "I'm Back" has some great drum programming from producer Mel-Man, as well as some of Em's wittiest lines and pop culture references. Funny and funky at the same time.

#407 C'mon Let's Move It Special Ed

Writers: Ed Archer, Howard Thompson
Producer: Howie Tee
Year: 1990/Album: Legal
Label: Profile
Memorable line:
"Thanks to the girls 'cuz you let me seduce ya!"

Never has the cross fade on a mixer been used better in a song than how it was used by Special Ed's DJ Ak-Shun throughout this one. Not only did the scratching of Public Enemy's "Bring the Noise" sound good ("yeah y'all c'mon), but the way he quickly moved the fader to bring the sample of "Miss Broadway" by Belle Epoque in and out of the mix was absolutely brilliant. "C'mon Let's Move It" was the last hit single from Special Ed's all too brief career. Both of his first two albums are worth checking out.

#406 Savoir Faire Chic

Writers: Bernard Edwards, Nile Rodgers Producers: Bernard Edwards, Nile Rodgers Year: 1978-79/Album: *C'est Chic* Label: Atlantic

The 1970s was the golden age for self-contained bands. Out of all the great ones on the R&B/Funk scene at that time, music fans still point to Parliament-Funkadelic and Earth, Wind & Fire as the two very best during that era both on records and in concert. Yet even with those legendary ensembles at the height of their powers in the '70s, the band that dominated the most in the final year of that decade was Chic. Led by the production and songwriting team of bass player Bernard Edwards & guitarist Nile Rodgers, along with drummer Tony Thompson and singers Alfa Anderson & Luci Martin, Chic are best remembered for their legendary Platinum dance hits "Le Freak" and "Good Times"; each of which reached #1 on the Billboard R&B and Pop charts. In fact, "Good Times" was the #1 R&B hit for the entire year of 1979 with 6 weeks in the top spot. "Le Freak" held the #1 R&B spot for the last 5 weeks of 1978, hit #1 three separate times on the Pop chart between December '78 & February '79, and became the biggest selling single in the history of Atlantic Records. Meanwhile the album it came from, C'est Chic, ended up as the #1 R&B album of '79 with 11 weeks at the top. While "Le Freak" and its follow-up single "I Want Your Love" drove sales of C'est Chiato Double Platinum status, the two songs that directly followed "Le Freak" and preceded "I Want Your Love" on the album represent Chic on The MC 500. This is the first of the two.

"Savoir Faire" is a jazzy mid-tempo instrumental that proved Chic were skilled musicians capable of much more than just killer dance tunes. Nile Rodgers' excellent guitar work, and the breezy sound of the Chic strings (conducted by concert master Gene Orloff and played by the all female trio of Cheryl Hong, Karen Milne, and Marianne Carroll) take center stage here. Add in the great bass playing of the late Bernard Edwards, along with some tasty drumming from the late Tony Thompson, and you get a sophisticated song with a title that fits the whole thing perfectly. Chic defined what I call "late-'70s New York cool", and "Savoir Faire" may be the coolest song they ever did. It was used in the intro of "Hit U From the Back" by Rick Ross in 2006. Since that's #428 on the 500, this is the first of several examples where both an original composition and a song that sampled it each made my musical All-Star Team.

NOTE: The instrumental "Sao Paulo" from Chic's solid debut album is nice too.

#405 Just Roll Fabu

Writer: Lathun Grady
Producer: Young Lathun
Year: 1995
Label: Big Beat/Atlantic
Memorable line:
"Cause I got to let you know what you do to me."

They had a cool look (short bob haircuts that made them look like a more hood version of Changing Faces); they had the sexy vibe; and more importantly, they had a hit single. So if there's one music question I don't have the answer to it's this one: why didn't these chicks ever come out with a full CD?! Fabu are one of *the* truest definitions of a one hit wonder since this is the only

song they ever released. "Just Roll" is a slinky G-funk keyboard groove that I've never gotten tired of. One version of this had a shorter intro that said "Fabu! Throw your hands in the air for Fabu! Fabu! It rolls on & on with Fabu!" I never cared for the mix down on that version, so I always wished they had tacked that intro onto the original.

#404 Body Contact Contract The Trammps

Writers: Norman Harris,
Bruce Gray, Jimmy Hendricks
Producer: Norman Harris
Year: 1977/Album: *Disco Inferno*Label: Atlantic
Memorable line:
"On the dotted line!"

Best known for their classic "Disco Inferno" (burn, baby burn!), the Trammps provided some *great* party songs in the late 1970s. Several of those were also part of the Chicago House music scene in the '80s, and that's how I was introduced to this cut. I first heard it in January 1986 on a killer edition of Lee Collins' Saturday night "Disco Madness" radio show on WHPK. I also heard it on a tape of legendary House DJ Ron Hardy from his club the Music Box around the same time. "Body Contact Contract" is the first of many songs on the 500 that fits in both of those categories. Drummer & bass singer Earl Young provides the memorable line, while the lyrics as a whole make great use of legal document language as a metaphor for a physical relationship. Sign it!

#403 Heartache Tonight The Eagles

Writers: Don Henley, Glenn Frey,
Bob Seger, J.D. Souther
Producer: Bill Szymczyk
Year: 1979/Album: *The Long Run*Label: Elektra/Asylum
Memorable line:
"Some people like to stay out late, some folks can't hold out that long.
But NOBODY wants to go home now!
There's too much goin' on."

About two years after Queen's stomp & clap arena rock classic "We Will Rock You", the Eagles took a similar approach for this #1 Pop hit. Unlike Queen's cut, "Heartache Tonight" not only works as a sports stadium anthem, it also has a "small bar in the country" feel to it. "Heartache Tonight" won a Grammy Award for Best Rock Vocal Performance by a Duo or Group in 1980, and it's the first of four songs on my 500 from The Eagles.

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#402 Take the Long Way Home Supertramp

Writers: Rick Davies, Roger Hodgson
Producers: Supertramp, Peter Henderson
Year: 1979/Album: *Breakfast in America*Label: A&M
Memorable line:
"When you look through the years
and see what you could have been.
Oh, what you might have been,

I've always been more into music than lyrics, but when I got into Supertramp's 1979 album *Breakfast in America* in 2001 it was definitely for the lyrics. The whole theme of isolation and disappointment while away from home connected with me because that's what I was living at the time. "Take the Long Way Home" is just one of the great songs from that classic #1 album, and the first of two to make my 500.

if you had had more time."

NOTE: *Breakfast in America* won a Grammy Award for Best Album Package in 1980. The album's title track was used for the 2006 Pop hit "Cupid's Chokehold" by Gym Class Heroes.

#401 Shot Down In Flames AC/DC

Writers: Angus Young,
Malcolm Young, Bon Scott
Producer: Robert "Mutt" Lange
Year: 1979/Album: *Highway to Hell*Label: Atlantic
Memorable line:
"I said 'baby what's the going price?'
She told me to go to hell."

It's always cool to get a woman's phone number, but sometimes it doesn't quite work out that way. "Shot Down in Flames" is my theme for getting rejected. It's never a good feeling to get turned down, but the energy and humor of this song make it much easier to deal with, so this tune immediately comes to mind whenever that situation occurs. Another great track from AC/DC's awesome breakthrough album *Highway to Hell*.

400 to 301

#400 Talkin' Loud and Sayin' Nothing James Brown

Writers: James Brown, Bobby Byrd
Producer: James Brown
Year: 1972/Albums: *There It Is*and *Funk Power 1970: A Brand New Thang*Label: Polydor
Memorable line:
"Don't tell me how to do my thang,
when you can't do your own!"

In the spring of 1995 an article appeared in my campus newspaper with a bunch of half-assed statements from people in the communications department about their lack of radio classes. It ticked me off so bad that I wrote a scathing response and titled it after this song. The whole experience is documented in a chapter called "Rage Against the Machine" in the first book of my Sex Time And Radio series. As for the song itself, "Talkin' Loud and Sayin' Nothing" was originally recorded in 1970 as an experimental rock single, but was pulled just before it was supposed to be released. It was then re-recorded when Bootsy Collins and his boys joined JB, but still wasn't released until almost two years later in edited form on the album There It Isl and as a two-part single that reached #1 on the Billboard R&B chart. The best version available is the complete 14 minute take, which can be found on the CD compilation Funk Power 1970: A Brand New Thang. Awesome political funk at its finest.



Talking with James Brown. March 20, 1996. Photo by Jimmi Jam Richards

#399 Someone To Talk To James Brown

Writers: St. Clair Pinckney, James Brown
Producer: James Brown
Year: 1979/Album: *Take a Look at Those Cakes*Label: Polydor
Memorable line:
"Night & day, night & day, night & day."

Have you ever had a phone full of numbers and *still* felt like you had no one to talk to? I've definitely felt that way on more than a few occasions, and this little known mellow late-'70s JB cut captures that idea perfectly to me.

Brown's singing is very soulful here, and he offers himself as the person to talk to in the lyrics. The vocal refrain that goes throughout the song is actually pretty comforting, and it's accompanied by an excellent bass line. "Someone To Talk To" is a melancholy, yet soothing anthem from a totally underrated James Brown album. In fact, *Take a Look at Those Cakes* is my pick for his best post-1974 LP.

#398 New Frontier Donald Fagen

Writer: Donald Fagen
Producer: Gary Katz
Year: 1982/Album: *The Nightfly*Label: Warner Bros.
Memorable line:
"It's just a dugout that my dad built,
in case the Reds decide to push the button down."

I had no idea who Donald Fagen was when this song was out (he's the singing half of the legendary jazzy rock group Steely Dan), but I remember hearing it and liking it. "New Frontier" is about a party in a fallout shelter during the Cold War era of the 1950s; when the threat of the USA and Russia going to war at any minute seemed *very* possible. This is the first of two songs from Fagen's first solo album to make my 500; an album that is easily one of my all-time favorites. Surprisingly, there's a real video for this song that features a Fagen look-a-like.

#397 Life Is Just a Moment-Part 2 Roy Ayers Ubiquity

Writers: Chano O'Ferral, Roy Ayers
Producer: Roy Ayers
Year: 1976/Album: *Mystic Voyage*Label: Polydor
Memorable line:
"You better enjoy it."

I was already aware of this one, but I really didn't give it the attention it deserved until I heard it sampled in 1998 by the rap group Sporty Thievz for their single "Cheapskates". I've been on it ever since. "Life Is Just a Moment-Part 2" includes standout performances from lead vocalist Chicas, drummer Ricky Lawson, bass player Byron Miller, and conga player & co-writer Chano O'Ferral from the Ubiquity band. I prefer "Part 2" of this song over "Part 1" because of the way it starts off with the "la-la" vocals. The first of six tunes from the great Roy Ayers to make my 500, and there could've been several more.

#396 Celebrate Earth, Wind & Fire

Writers: Maurice White,
Charles Stepney, Philip Bailey
Producers: Maurice White, Charles Stepney
Year: 1975-76/Album: *Gratitude*Label: Columbia
Memorable line:
"Seasons change, they rearrange,
so why can't you and I?"

Another one of the five studio tracks from their live album *Gratitude*, and the second of three to make my 500. Unlike a lot of songs where the chorus is the best part, the vocal arrangement, bass line, and percussion on the verses make "Celebrate" stand out more than the hook does. Another album cut that shows the depth of the EW&F catalog.

#395 Dancin' & Prancin' Candido

Writer: Louis Small
Producer: Joe Cain
Year: 1979/Album: *Dancin' & Prancin'*Label: Salsoul
Memorable line:
"Dancin' all night...feelin' all right."

I first heard this dreamy disco song in late 1990 on a House tape by the late Frankie Knuckles that my boy Shu Ra Rogers gave me. It was during finals week of my first semester of college, and while the tape showed exactly why Knuckles was a legendary DJ, this song was one of the main highlights that I've enjoyed both in and beyond that mix. Special props go to Prince Joseph for his work on tenor saxophone, and songwriter Louis Small for all his piano and synthesizer playing. Another song from percussionist Candido that I already knew comes up later in the 500. Both were made possible by members of the band Kleeer, who also made my musical All-Star Team with one of their own songs.





Left: with DJ Frankie Knuckles in 2007. Photo by Raymond Boyd Right: with George Clinton in 2002

#394 Man's Best Friend George Clinton

Writers: George Clinton, Garry Shider,
Linda Shider, Kenny Gambrell
Producers: George Clinton with Garry Shider
Year: 1982-83/Album: Computer Games
Label: Capitol
Memorable line:
"Standin' guard in the yard!"

Everybody knows the classic "Atomic Dog", but this dog song is the one I've always loved from George and the crew. While the backwards track in the better known Dog was a sonic revolution, "Man's Best Friend" had more familiar sounding P-Funk elements to it; such as the clap track and keyboard bass used in hits like "Flash Light" and "(not just) Knee Deep". In fact, Sir Nose D-Void of Funk, the arch enemy of funk from the later Parliament albums, even makes an appearance here saying "this sounds familiar". There's also a great guitar solo from the late Eddie Hazel, plus some great background vocals from Mallia Franklin, Shirley Hayden, and Janice Evans of Parlet; Jeanette McGruder and Sheila Horn of the Brides of Funkenstein, and Gwen Dozier. On the *Computer Games* album, "Man's Best Friend" went right into the first single released under George Clinton's name before "Atomic Dog"; "Loopzilla". I'm forever grateful to my uncle Casey for letting me have the album when it came out.

NOTE: There was also an extended version of "Man's Best Friend" released on 12 inch single, but it had a different mix that I don't care for.

#393 When the Music's Over The Doors

Writers: John Densmore, Robby Krieger,
Ray Manzarek, Jim Morrison
Producer: Paul A. Rothchild
Year: 1967/Album: Strange Days
Label: Elektra
Memorable line:
"Well the music is your special friend.
Dance on fire as it intends.
Music is your only friend, un...til the end!"
and
"We want the world and we want it...NOW!"

The oldest song on my musical All-Star Team, "When the Music's Over" is a surrealistic journey from one of rock's all-time greatest bands. The late Jim Morrison and Ray Manzarek are particularly great on vocals and keyboards respectively. I first heard this in 1999, but it wasn't until I heard it one night on the radio in 2007 (40 years after its release) that it truly spoke to me. I was driving around looking for a parking spot outside of a club on the north side of Chicago called Cherry Red where Vince Adams was DJing and Teddy Gilmore and a few other promoters were throwing the hottest party in the city at the time. Classic rock station WDRV aka "The Drive" was playing "When the Music's Over", and the theme of the music being over seemed to fit the situation perfectly to me. Why? Because the era of radio personalities from the station I was working for hosting club events had seemingly come to an end. At one point in 1999, four of us had stood on stage and been stars at a party with the same promoter & DJ as the one I was going to in 2007. But in '07 getting gigs hosting clubs, and the money that came with them, was damn near impossible. I try to separate that thought from this song whenever I play it.

400 to 301 131

#392

We

Brass Construction

Writer: Randy Muller
Producer: Jeff Lane
Year: 1977
Album: Brass Construction III
Label: United Artists
Memorable line:
"Movin' straight ahead,
and ain't no turnin' back no no!"

Brass Construction was one of the best funk bands of the mid-to-late 1970s. I got their first three albums in my collection around 1993, but it wasn't until 1999 when I really got into them, and they became one of my favorites. "We" is an energetic feel good track in the tradition of their previous hits "Movin", "Changin", and "Ha Cha Cha". Unlike those three jams, "We" wasn't released as a single, but it still stands as one of the band's best tunes. This is the first of three songs from the *Brass Construction III* album in this book, and the first of seven cuts from this band on The MC 500.

#391 (Fallin' Like) Dominoes Donald Byrd

Writers: Sigidi Abdullah,
Bradley Ridgell, Harold Clayton
Producers: Larry Mizell, Fonce Mizell
Year: 1975-76
Album: Places and Spaces
Label: Blue Note
Memorable line:
"We'll stand our problems all in a row.
Watch them fall like dominoes."

Easily one of the best Mizell brothers productions, I heard about this joint before actually hearing it. When I told my cousin Jan how much I liked the Donald Byrd song "Places and Spaces" in 1989, she told me Byrd had another bad jam on the same album called "Dominoes". It was another four years before I found the record, and I quickly found out Jan was right. The bass line played by session ace Chuck Rainey alone is enough to get this on my All-Star Team. "Dominoes" also features the usual cool vocal sound found on other Mizell productions from the mid-1970s; several of which are on my 500. I chose "Dominoes" for the version on the classic *Places and Spaces* album; I had no idea there was an extended version of it until I searched for a clip of it to post online while I was doing "The MC 500" countdown in 2013.

NOTE: According to Discogs.com, "Dominoes" co-author Harold Clayton (credited as H. Jackson on the vinyl LP) died in an automobile accident in the year 2000 at age 53.

#390 Beginnings Chicago

Writer: Robert Lamm Producer: James William Guercio

Year: 1969

Album: Chicago Transit Authority

Label: Columbia Memorable line:

"Woe woe woe woe woe

WOE-OHOHOHOHOHOHOHOH!"

Known as Chicago Transit Authority until Mayor Richard J. Daley threatened to sue them, the band that became simply Chicago has a vast catalog of hits. I learned most of them, including this one, from listening to the classic rock station CD 94.7 back in 1998 & '99. It's a shame that station didn't last, but the knowledge I gained from it was life changing. Discovering "Beginnings" 30 years after its original release proves something I've always said: music has no expiration date. Oddly enough though, "Beginnings" and two other tunes from Chicago's 1969 debut album didn't actually become hit singles until after their third album Chicago III was released in 1971. AM radio stations felt the songs were too long, thus they weren't given much airplay outside of album oriented FM stations. Fortunately producer James William Guercio and Columbia Records were smart enough to re-release the songs as shorter singles once Chicago established itself on AM radio in 1970 with edited versions of "Make Me Smile" and "25 or 6 to 4". The band wasn't too thrilled about their songs being chopped up, but the process helped them place a staggering seven songs on the Billboard pop chart in 1971; four of which had been on their first LP two years earlier.

#389 Candy Cameo

Writers: Larry Blackmon, Tomi Jenkins
Producer: Larry Blackmon
Year: 1986-87/Album: Word Up!
Label: Atlanta Artists/Polygram
Memorable line:
"I wanna know can you feel it too?
Just like I do. Woo!"



Word Up! album signed by Cameo members Larry Blackmon, Tomi Jenkins, Aaron Mills, and Charlie Singleton

Cameo had always been one of my favorite groups since they were a big band with around ten members. By 1985 they were a trio of Larry Blackmon,

Tomi Jenkins, and Nathan Leftenant, with recording sessions rounded out by "Friends" that often included former band members. Their popularity continued to increase in '85 and '86 due to memorable videos for smash hits like "Attack Me With Your Love", "Single Life", and "Word Up". When "Candy" became the hottest song out in the spring of 1987 it was their shining moment. Cameo had not only reached Platinum sales status, they were the hippest act in all of popular music aside from Run-DMC. Group leader Larry Blackmon's red codpiece and high, flattop haircut had also become era defining symbols of Black culture.

Believe it or not, "Candy" can still be heard today at hip-hop parties whenever a DJ wants to "go old school". I find that interesting because out of all the great bands that were around in the late '70s heyday of funk, Cameo was the one who kept their funk uncut all the way through the '80s, and reached their peak just as hip-hop established itself as a major force in the music industry. This is the first of 7 songs on my 500 from this band, but this one captures that moment in time when Cameo sat atop the entire music world. Owww!

#388 Saturday Night Schoolly D

Writer: Jesse Weaver
Producer: Schoolly D
Year: 1986-87
Album: Saturday Night!-The Album
Label: Jive
Memorable line:
"The b***h jumped up with no respect.
I had to put the big, big b***h in check."

Many hip-hop historians consider Schoolly D to be the first "gangsta rapper" due to his hardcore 1985-86 street hits "PSK What Does That Mean?" and "Gucci Time". But this is the track where the Philadelphia bred rapper added his sense of humor; and for me that made the songs he did after his initial releases even more interesting. Cuts like "Do It, Do It" and "Smoke Some Kill" were just as fun as they were explicit, and "Saturday Night" is the best of that bunch. Both the song and Saturday Night!-The Album were originally released on the rapper's own Schoolly D Records in 1986, but I first heard it in the summer of 1987 when it was re-released after Schoolly was signed by Jive Records. I always loved what I thought was a sample of an older song with a cowbell on the track. Yet in Brian Coleman's book Check the Technique: Liner Notes for Hip-Hop Junkies, Schoolly said that sound happened when he accidentally "pressed some button and it made the kick and snare go to timbale sounds" on a drum machine. The story in the first verse about Schoolly, his mom, and his female company that produced the "Memorable line" I chose is still as funny to me now as it was back in '87. Schoolly D also became the first rapper I heard to incorporate P-Funk into his lyrics; adapting George Clinton's dirty nursery rhymes from Funkadelic's "Let's Take it to the Stage" for this song's last verse. I was a sophomore in high school when this was out,

and thanks to Chicago's WHPK, I was *totally* into rap music at that time; much more so than most people I knew. "Saturday Night" is one of the songs that captures that time perfectly for me, thus it gets a spot on The MC 500.

#387 .357-Break It On Down LL Cool J

Writers: James Todd Smith, Darryl Pierce,
Dwayne Simon, D.J. Pooh
Producers: LL Cool J, the L.A. Posse
Year: 1987/Album: Bigger And Deffer
Label: Def Jam/Columbia
Memorable line:

"I'm a nappy sappy crappy imitator of who?
If I even imitated, it wouldn't be you!"

These days LL Cool J is known by many as a family man and TV star who hands out roses to women in concerts and occasionally hosts the Grammy Awards. But believe it or not, he used to be a pissed off rapper who showed that an individual could demolish entire crews and posses if he was strong enough and skilled enough to do so. His second album, *Bigger And Deffer*, is not only the best example of that attitude, it's also one of the foundations that the radio career of MC Marcus Chapman was built on. Five of the album's 11 songs made my 500, and this is one of the most aggressive. ".357" also contains some of the best rapping LL ever recorded. Anyone who might question his skills as an MC need look no further.

#386 Here I Am (Come and Take Me) Al Green

Writers: Al Green, Mabon "Teenie" Hodges
Producers: Willie Mitchell, Al Green
Year: 1973/Album: Call Me
Label: Hi
Memorable line:
"All this love inside of me,
I believe there's going to be an explosion."

When I originally started checking out a lot of '70s music in 1988, one artist I didn't care for was Al Green. I changed my mind when I began researching the year end *Billboard* charts at the music library in college. Green's *I'm Still in Love With You* was the #1 R&B album of 1973, and its follow up, *Call Me*, was #6 for that same year. *Call Me* was also the #1 R&B album the week I was born, and by late 1994 & early '95 I was using the titles and lyrics from its 3 hits to my advantage. "Here I Am (Come and Take Me)" is the first of those 3 to make my 500, and the first of 6 Al Green songs on this All-Star Team. It's also the last of his 7 straight million selling singles (he picked up an eighth Gold single three releases later). As great as this studio version is, I highly recommend checking out his awesome live performance of this track on "Soul Train" from 1974. Fortunately it's posted on YouTube.

#385 Was That All It Was (12 inch version) Jean Carn

Writers: Linda Conlon, Jerry Butler, John Usry, Jr. Producers: Jerry Butler, John Usry, Jr. Year: 1979

Label: Philadelphia International Memorable line:

"Passion left behind, out of sight and out of mind, gone forever."

The first time I heard this was in a house mix by DJ Farley Jackmaster Funk on Chicago's WBMX in 1985, and I immediately stopped everything I was doing. At the time it was the music and Jean Carn's vocals that caught my attention, but as I've gotten older, the lyrics are what really connect with me. "Was That All It Was" makes me think about some of the women who crossed my path and helped me enjoy life just a little more for a little while. Unfortunately I'm also pretty sure I'll never see or hear from some of them again, not because I don't want to, but because that's just kinda what happens sometimes as people go on their life journeys. I guess in some cases that really was all it was. A great performance from Jean Carn that deserved to be a bigger hit than it was, and her first of two entries on The MC 500.

NOTE: the album version fades out at 3:58, while the extended 12 inch version is the full 6 and a half minute take.

#384 Rocks Off The Rolling Stones

Writers: Mick Jagger, Keith Richards
Producer: Jimmy Miller
Year: 1972/Album: Exile on Main St.
Label: Rolling Stones/Atlantic
Memorable line:
"The sunshine bores the daylights outta me."

I started checking out the Stones' catalog in 2000 while I was in Indianapolis, and a lot of their music really connected with me. "Rocks Off" is the opening track to their best overall album; 1972's double LP *Exile on Main St.* It's energetic late night bar music mixed with some extremely clever wordplay from Mick Jagger. The first of 4 Stones songs on my 500.



Rare Rolling Stones postcards included in the original Exile on Main St.vinyl release

#383 I'll Stay Funkadelic

Writers: George Clinton, Grace Cook
Producer: George Clinton
Year: 1974
Album: Standing On the Verge of Getting It On
Label: Westbound
Memorable line:
"Knowing my reward when she returns
keeps me hangin' on."

Rap fans will recognize this as the sample for Crucial Conflict's 1996 hit "Hay", but I was on this bad boy in 1988; back when it wasn't cool to like anything from the '70s aside from James Brown. The MC 500 contains a lot of different artists and types of music, but make no mistake, Parliament-Funkadelic is my all-time favorite group. This dreamy guitar ballad was originally done in a different style in the late '60s as "I'll Wait" when they were still a standup vocal group called the Parliaments. "I'll Stay" is the first of many examples in these two books of why this band was so great beyond just their hit singles. Props to the late Eddie Hazel and Garry Shider for their great guitars and vocals. Hazel was actually the co-writer on this song. Grace Cook was his mother, and he used her name due to some type of publishing issue at the time.

#382 Big Ole Butt LL Cool J

Writers: James Todd Smith, Dwayne Simon, Brian Latture Producers: Dwayne Simon, LL Cool J

Year: 1989

Album: Walking With a Panther
Label: Def Jam/Columbia
Memorable line:

"I circled it and teased it and made her squeal; grabbed a pack of bullets, and pulled out the steel."

In the 1991 home video compilation "Future of the Funk", Russell Simmons said one of Def Jam's biggest mistakes was releasing "I'm That Type of Guy" as the first single from LL's third album *Walking With a Panther*l instead of going with this joint. "Type of Guy" was a gold selling crossover hit, but "Big Ole Butt" was hot in the streets with the hardcore rap fans. To this day it's the only song from the *Panther*l album that holds up against the many hits LL acquired over the years (although it wasn't the only good song from that album). The track was *awesome*, and the lyrics were can't miss. Video wasn't bad either. Be sure to also check out the video for the single's B-side "One Shot at Love" too. It contains behind-the-scenes footage of the makings of the "Big Ole Butt" video that are actually more revealing than the video itself. Actress Mari Marrow appeared in it before she became better known.

#381 My Thang James Brown

Writer: James Brown
Producer: James Brown
Year: 1974/Album: Hell
Label: Polydor
Memorable line:
"Takin' off my shirt.
'Bout to work me to death!"

After releasing the legendary hit "The Payback", James reached #1 again without help from most of his band The JB's. Studio musicians played the music to this, proving that James' formula for funk, aka his "thang", had become the main thang of the era. It's also funny to hear him start the song by telling guys how "to get down with a broad". Advice from a sex machine with a cool bass line played by Gordon Edwards.

#380 Circles Atlantic Starr

Writers: David Lewis, Wayne Lewis
Producer: James Anthony Carmichael
Year: 1982/Album: Brilliance
Label: A&M
Memorable line:
"I guess my life will keep on goin' round & round, until I get away from you!"

They may have had bigger pop success in '86 & '87 with the beautiful Barbara Weathers on vocals, but the original incarnation with Sharon Bryant will always be my favorite version of Atlantic Starr. I still remember sitting at the kitchen table and taping this off WJPC 950 AM in Chicago. I've never gotten tired of it, and the lyrics about people wasting time definitely resonate. Whether it's business or personal, make up your damn mind and don't waste my time. One of Atlantic Starr's few up-tempo hits, "Circles" is the first of two songs from this band on my 500.

#379 Sometimes Dancin' Brownstone

Writers: Nichole Gilbert, John O'Brien, Jonah,
Carsten Schack, Kenneth Karlin, Lloyd James
Producers: Soulshock, Karlin
Year: 1995/Album: From the Bottom Up
Label: MJJ/Epic
Memorable line:
"Sexy movements keep you dreaming of
all the little games you play at night."

I've always loved when DJs play reggae songs at parties because it always makes women dance real sexy. Although I've never heard this at a party, it captures that ideal *perfectly*. "Sometimes Dancin" is not only great musically, it also has a great vocal performance from the girls. Maxee handled the lead here, while Nicci and MiMi added to the sexy rasta vibe. In 1997 I had DJ Steve "Miggedy" Maestro loop the instrumental intro to this so I could talk over it on my radio shows. *From the Bottom Up* was actually the first CD I ever bought, and "Sometimes Dancin" is the third of three songs from it on my 500. Sadly, Charmayne "Maxee" Maxwell died under mysterious circumstances on February 28, 2015.



#378 Smokey Funkadelic

Writers: George Clinton, Garry Shider
Producer: George Clinton
Year: 1976/Album: *Hardcore Jollies*Label: Warner Bros.
Memorable line:
"Lookin' back at you I lost a lot, you got a lot, miss you a lot."

A spacey funk jam with great vocals from the late Glenn Goins, who died at age 24 just two years after this was recorded. Drummer Jerome Brailey, keyboard wiz Bernie Worrell, and guitarist/vocalist Garry Shider also give stellar performances on this one. One cool thing about "Smokey" is the way it changes about half way through. The drums fade out, and the keyboards are left to carry the groove, giving it a sound quality that fits the spacey album art done by illustrator Pedro Bell. This is the first of three songs on my 500 from my favorite Funkadelic album; the often unheralded *Hardcore Jollies*.

#377 From Us to You Stairsteps

Writers: Kenneth Burke, Clarence Burke, Jr.
Producers: Billy Preston,
Robert Margouleff, Stairsteps
Year: 1976/Album: 2nd Resurrection
Label: Dark Horse/A&M
Memorable line:
"So sooth your blues away.
Hoping that tomorrow is a better day."

This family group from Chicago is best known for their classic 1970 hit "O-o-h Child" (used for the hook in 2Pac's hit "Keep Ya Head Up"), which was issued under their original name, The Five Stairsteps. When sister Alohe left the group, the four brothers (Kenneth, Dennis, James, and Clarence, Jr.) dropped the number from the group's moniker and continued as The Stairsteps. "From Us to You" was their biggest hit since "O-o-h Child", and I first heard it in a 1992 mix done by House music DJ Glenn Underground. I had no idea what the title was or who made it until a fellow music aficionado in Chicago's Hyde Park neighborhood named Rob gave me the info. The record was quickly added to my collection, and was played on one of my "Best of the Old School" college radio shows in November 1993.

The Burke brothers would go on to have another big hit as The Invisible Man's Band in 1980 called "All Night Thing", while Keni Burke would become best known for his much sampled 1982 solo jam "Rising to the Top". But for my money, "From Us to You" is the cut that resonates with me the most. A Top 10 R&B hit that's become a rarely heard gem, there's also an instrumental version called "From Me to You" on Keni Burke's 1977 self-titled solo album.

#376 C'mon and Love Me Kiss

Writer: Paul Stanley
Producers: Neil Bogart, Kiss
Year: 1975/Album: *Dressed to Kill*Label: Casablanca
Memorable line:

"You're good lookin' and you're lookin' like you should be good."

I first heard this when I saw a piece of its promotional clip in a five part VH1 documentary series called "The '70s" that aired in 1996. The whole second verse reminds me of a particular event that happened while I was hosting the weekly Saturday night party at Chicago's River West Brewery in summer 1999 (documented in the "Balance" chapter of my book Sex Time And Radio Vol. 3: "The Cult of Personality"). One of my "radio rock star" anthems from that year, "C'mon and Love Me" is one of the best tracks Kiss recorded prior to their fall '75 breakthrough album Alive! The in-concert version contained on that album is also worth checking out.

#375 Joy (album version) Blackstreet

Writers: Teddy Riley,
Tammy Lucas, Michael Jackson
Producer: Teddy Riley
Year: 1994/Blackstreet
Label: Interscope
Memorable line:
"Check one, check two.
I can't hold back I'm in love with you."

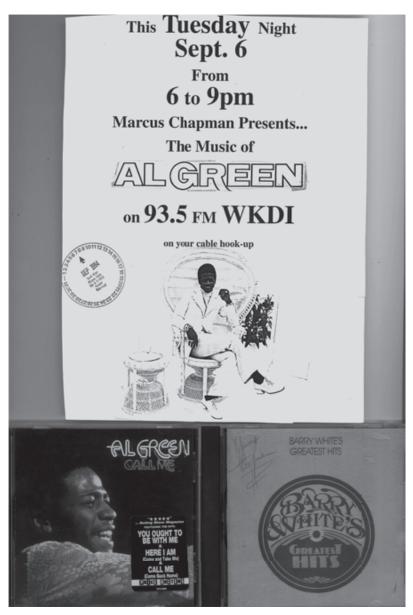
In summer 1994 I was interning at WGCI, but a lot of talk in the streets of Chicago was about the new radio station in town, WEJM alias "106 Jamz". Their motto was "where hip-hop lives", yet even with all the raps they played, this R&B joint from Teddy Riley's then-new group is the song that I remember the most. I only heard it late at night, and I liked it so much I would've bought the cassette single of it had there been one. "Booti Call" was the official single being promoted at the time, and their next release, "Before I Let You Go" ended up being the big hit from the *Blackstreet* CD.

It would be almost another year before "Joy" was released in a remixed form as the group's 3rd single; a remix with sappy strings, the rap flavored "Memorable line" I chose taken out, and a video that changed the subject from a woman to a child. Sorry, never liked that version. This one makes my 500. Good lead vocal performance by Levi Little on a song that was originally intended for Michael Jackson's 1991 album *Dangerous*.

#374 Call Me (Come Back Home) Al Green

Writers: Willie Mitchell,
Al Green, Al Jackson, Jr.
Producers: Willie Mitchell, Al Green
Year: 1973/Album: Call Me
Label: Hi
Memorable line:
"And if you find you're a long ways from home,
and somebody's doing you wrong.
Just call me baby, and come back home."

The title track from the #1 R&B album in the country the week I was born, Al Green was at his dominant peak when this cool easy going hit was released. The title describes something I always like for people to do; call me. Texting, tweeting, emailing, and Facebook messages are all fine, but none of them replace the communication that comes from actual talking. "Call Me (Come Back Home)" was the sixth of Al Green's seven straight million selling singles, and deservedly so. It was also the last co-written by drummer Al Jackson, Jr., who was tragically murdered at his home in 1975.



1994 radio show flyer with Al Green and Barry White CDs

#373 Love Serenade (Parts 1 & 2) Barry White

Writer: Barry White
Producer: Barry White
Year: 1975
Album: Barry White's Greatest Hits
Label: 20th Century
Memorable line:
"Everybody's gone, so take the receiver off the phone."

Barry White was a great vocalist, but his rap on this song is so cold he didn't even have to sing on it. His combination of classical strings and rhythmic funk, two styles of music that seemingly have nothing to do with each other, made BW one of the most innovative musical minds of all-time. "Love Serenade" is probably the most literal example of those two different worlds coming together. It was originally separated into two parts on different sides of his 1975 album *Just Another Way to Say I Love You*. Later that year they were combined into one superior 7 minute version and released on his first *Greatest Hits* album. The words "Lord have mercy on me" towards the end of Part 1 are only heard on the combined version. Part 2 was used in the 1991 hit "Money and the Power" by rapper Scarface. An awesome erotic masterpiece, "Love Serenade" Parts 1 & 2 deservedly gets a spot on The MC 500.

#372 Didn't Mean to Turn You On 2nd II None

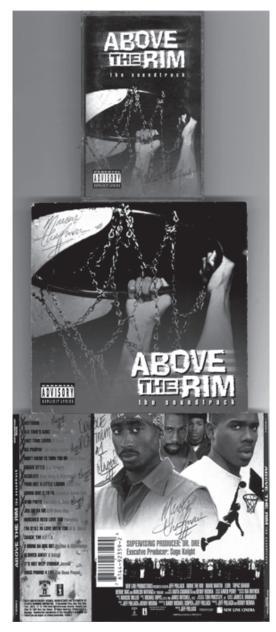
Writers: Deon Barnett, Kelton McDonald, David Blake Producers: 2nd II None, DJ Quik

Year: 1994

Album: Above the Rim: The Soundtrack

Label: Death Row Memorable line: "Sex don't have to be if you don't want it to be, but when it's time to make it happen make it happen with me. What?!"

2nd II None was a duo of Dee and KK from Compton California who were affiliated with rapper/producer DJ Quik. They had two hits in late '91/early '92, but this was a whole 'nother thang. "Didn't Mean to Turn You On" is the first of 7 songs from the Above the Rim soundtrack on my 500; all of which perfectly capture that moment in time when west coast G-funk RULED. I first heard it on Saturday, May 7, 1994 at an apartment barbecue thrown by a few members of Sigma Gamma Rho sorority. Everyone ate barbecued chicken wings off the grill, watched the 8th seeded Denver Nuggets upset the #1 seed Seattle Super Sonics in the first round of the NBA playoffs, and listened to Above the Rim two times in a row. One member of Omega Psi Phi said this was the coldest song on the CD. I disagreed, but "Didn't Mean to Turn You On" was and still is one of my favorites. That was a great day that I'll never forget; a day that represents a carefree time of youth and possibilities.



The *Above the Rim* cassette, with the front and back covers of the CD. The cassette had three bonus tracks not included on the CD.

#371 Dreams Fleetwood Mac

Writer: Stevie Nicks
Producers: Fleetwood Mac,
Richard Dashut, Ken Caillat
Year: 1977/Album: *Rumours*Label: Warner Bros.
Memorable line:
"Women, they will come and they will go."

One of several songs I recall hearing on AM station WLS on the clock radio in my parents' room when I was a kid. I never knew the name of it or who it was by, but I always liked it. Finally found out the info in 1998 and got the album during my "classic rock excursion" to 2nd Hand Tunes and Hi-Fi record stores on North Clark Street in Chicago that Christmas Eve. "Dreams" was the second of four hit singles from the legendary album *Rumours*. That release spent a staggering 31 weeks atop the Billboard Pop albums chart in 1977, and I highly recommend viewing the documentary Rhino Records did about it as part of their "Classic Albums" series. According to vocalist Stevie Nicks, she wrote the song in a studio that belonged to Sly Stone. Some of Sly's vibe apparently seeped into the proceedings because "Dreams" certainly has a touch of funk in its grooves; especially in the drumming from Mick Fleetwood. This is the first of two songs from this great band to make my 500, and their only #1 hit in the USA.

#370 Blinded By the Light Manfred Mann's Earth Band

Writer: Bruce Springsteen
Producers: Manfred Mann and Earth Band
Year: 1976/Album: *The Roaring Silence*Label: Bronze/Warner Bros.
Memorable line:
"Mama always told me not to
look into the eyes of the sun.
But mama, that's where the fun is!"
and
"Hit it in its funny bone,
that's where they expect it least."

Like its predecessor on the 500, I remember this one from when I was a kid too. I hear "Blinded By the Light" a lot now on classic rock stations, and the wordplay is still funny to me all these years later. I also still love that '70s keyboard sound that drives the whole thing. Great job by group leader Manfred Mann on keys, Dave Flett on lead guitar, and Chris Hamlet Thompson on lead vocals. A fun song overall that was originally done by Bruce Springsteen three years earlier, but this version was a #1 hit. Drummer Chris Slade later joined AC/DC for their successful 1990 album *The Razor's Edge*.

#369 Burn Hollywood Burn Public Enemy with Ice Cube & Big Daddy Kane

Writers: O'Shea Jackson,
Antonio Hardy, Keith Shocklee,
Eric Sadler, Carlton Ridenhour
Producers: The Bomb Squad
(Hank Shocklee, Carl Ryder,
Eric "Vietnam" Sadler, Keith Shocklee)
Year: 1990/Album: Fear of a Black Planet
Label: Def Jam/Columbia
Memorable line:
"Yeah I'll check out a movie,
but it'll take a Black one to move me!"
and
"Even if now she got a perm!"

Regardless of what the reviews say or what kind of awards the film got, spending two hours of my day to watch some fantasy story about some BS that would probably never happen anyway, and don't include Black folks, has never been my idea of entertainment. From the first time I heard it in 1990, this song captured my attitude about movies; in most cases I can care less. Ice Cube & PE were at the height of their powers when this dropped, but Big Daddy Kane definitely stole the show on this one, and I still know his whole verse by heart. "Burn Hollywood Burn" is a great example of the "question and challenge anything" mindset that existed among African-American youth during the Afrocentric/conscious rap movement of the late 1980's and early '90s.

#368 Strange Games and Things Love Unlimited Orchestra

Writer: Barry White
Producer: Barry White
Year: 1976
Albums: My Sweet Summer Suite
and Full Length Funk
Label: 20th Century

The genius of "The Maestro" Barry White at work once again. I was first introduced to this in 1991 through another song on the 500, EPMD's "Manslaughter", and immediately wondered where the music came from. Although B White was given a co-writer's credit, it took me about 6 or 7 more years to find out exactly what the song was (there was no "WhoSampled.com" back then). "Strange Games and Things" has since been used several more times; most notably in 1998 for the #1 hit "No, No, No (Part 2)" by Destiny's Child. Originally released in a 4 minute version on the 1976 album *My Sweet Summer Suite*, the full 8 minute take was made available in 1999 on the Funk Essentials compilation *Full Length Funk*. It was a great discovery too, because "Strange Games and Things" sounds even better in its extended form.

NOTE: Dallas-Ft. Worth area residents will also recognize this song from its use during morning traffic reports on radio stations KBFB 97.9 The Beat and the former 94.5 KSOL.

#367 To Each His Own Faith, Hope & Charity

Writer: Van McCoy
Producer: Van McCoy
Year: 1975
Album: Faith, Hope & Charity
Label: RCA
Memorable line:
"I don't know what's right for you,
and you don't know what's right for me!"

This song exemplifies why I call myself a Music Historian. I've never heard anybody play it, but since I do music research, I bought the record anyway because I read about it in *The Billboard Book of Number One Rhythm & Blues Hits* by Adam White and Fred Bronson. Sure enough, it was well worth the 3 dollars I spent on it. "To Each His Own" is a great early disco dance tune by the late Van McCoy of "The Hustle" fame, and I can't help but wonder if he was ticked off when he wrote the lyrics. The song has some serious bite to it, as evidenced by the strong performance of the rhythm section (especially Gordon Edwards on bass and Steve Gadd on drums). Singer Brenda Hilliard (Faith) soars on the lead vocals, while Alert Bailey (Hope) and Diane Destry (Charity) excel along with her on the harmonies throughout. Add in the orchestra bells played by George Devens and you get a lost gem from the '70s that's worth checking out.

NOTE: Van McCoy also did a version of this on his own album *The Real McCoy* the following year called "(To Each His Own) That's My Philosophy". Sadly, he died from a heart attack in 1979 at the age of 39.

#366 Midnight Plane (Disco version) Ronnie Foster

Writer: Ronnie Foster
Producer: Jerry Peters
Year: 1978
Label: Columbia
Memorable line:
"I'm leavin', gonna fly away from you."

At the height of the '70s resurgence in 1993 & '94, the radio station I learned the most from was 106.3 WJPC in Chicago; programmed by Al Greer. This was just one of the rare gems I heard them play that I immediately added to my collection (and played on my own "The Best of the Old School" radio show when I went back to my campus in fall '93). The verses are cool, but like a lot of music of that era (especially disco) the song really gets going once the verses are over. The keyboards and bass are absolutely SICK on this; so much so that many people still think this is a Stevie Wonder song. The album version of "Midnight Plane" is slightly shorter and includes a vibe solo from Roy Ayers, but it's not nearly as good as the 12 inch version. A Killer performance!

#365 Anything (Old Skool Version) SWV featuring Wu-Tang Clan

Writer: Brian Alexander Morgan
Producer: Brian Alexander Morgan
Additional Production & Remix:
Allen Gordon, Jr. aka ALLSTAR
Year: 1994/Albums: The Remixes EP
and Above the Rim: The Soundtrack
Label: RCA and Death Row
Memorable line:

"Ka BOOM! Guess who stepped in the room?!
The S-s-W-w-U to the V!"
and
"Yo Taj! Another like platinum hit!"

Out of all the '90s girl groups, SWV aka Sisters With Voices, was my favorite because their hits had the broadest stylistic range. Singers Coko, LeLe, and Taj had good slow jams like "Rain" and the classic "Weak", mid-tempo grooves like the controversial "Downtown", and fast joints like "You're the One". In the last category, this remix of "Anything" was their best party song. It's also easily one of THE best remixes of the '90s. Released at the height of SWV's popularity, the buzz surrounding this remix was so strong in '94 that Milwaukee and Chicago DJ Mike Love said people were asking to hear it at parties before he and other DJs could even get copies of it!

The "Old Skool" remix of "Anything" was already hot as the opening track on the *Above the Rim* soundtrack when the version with Ol' Dirty Bastard, Method Man, and GZA from the Wu-Tang Clan appeared on

the SWV EP *The Remixes*. Although this new "remix of the remix" with Wu-Tang was the best version of them all, and was only on the latter CD, I still count it as an *Above the Rim* entry on my 500 because that's where the song first got its major exposure. A great snap shot of the summer 1994 vibe; a vibe made possible by the 1978 release "Get Up and Dance" by Freedom.

NOTE: Each version of the "Anything" Old Skool remix, including the one released on CD single and 12 inch vinyl, had a slightly different intro.

#364 Joyous Pleasure

Writer: Michael Hepburn
Producer: Wayne Henderson
Year: 1977/Album: *Joyous*Label: Fantasy
Memorable line:

"The way I like it, love to see you doin' your thang!"

The second of the 8 cuts from Pleasure in The MC 500, the title pretty much describes this song perfectly. "Joyous" is an awesome "feel good" dance track, and one of the few of the era to feature a lengthy guitar solo (played by band leader Marlon McClain). I was first exposed to it in part when the opening saxophone notes played by Dennis Springer were sampled by producer Marley Marl in LL Cool J's 1990 hit "To Da Break of Dawn" (#144 in the 500). But that sample is just a taste of the greatness in this cut, and the whole song stands as a jazzy funk classic. I also have a fun "joyous dance" that I do to this that no one has ever seen.

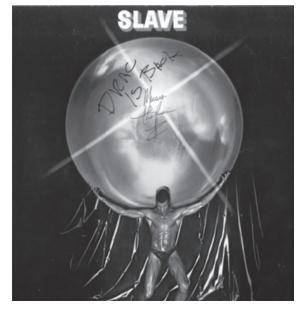


With Marlon McClain of Pleasure in 2007

#363 The Happiest Days Slave

Writers: Mark Adams, Carter Bradley, Tim Dozier,
Mark Hicks, Tom Lockett, Floyd Miller, Ray Turner,
Steve Washington, Danny Webster, Orion Wilhoite
Producer: Jeff Dixon
Year: 1977/Album: Slave
Label: Cotillion/Atlantic
Memorable line:

"Girl, I can't wait until tonight!"



Slave album signed by guitarist Mark "Drac" Hicks

Funk bands like Cameo, Con Funk Shun, and the Bar-Kays had hits with slow jams to go along with their up-tempo smashes. Other great bands of the

genre, like Slave, didn't have any major ballads, but their attempts at slowing down the tempo are at least interesting. I describe their debut album as "horny young boy funk" (some of the members were still in high school), and "The Happiest Days" is the only down tempo song on it. The opening line "it happened on a sunny day" sets the scene, and immediately makes me think of boys and girls doing "summer love things" during their vacation from school. This song captures that "summertime for kids in the late '70s" vibe perfectly to me. The happiest days indeed. And speaking of vacations...

#362 Let's Go On Vacation Sister Sledge

Writers: Bernard Edwards, Nile Rodgers
Producers: Bernard Edwards, Nile Rodgers
Year: 1980/Album: *Love Somebody Today*Label: Cotillion/Atlantic
Memorable line:
"A double L-R-I-G-H-T!"

Coming a year after their mega #1 hits "He's the Greatest Dancer" and "We Are Family", and less than a year after the anti-disco backlash, the second Sister Sledge album produced by Bernard Edwards & Nile Rodgers of Chic was almost doomed before it was even recorded. Aside from the opening track/lead off single "Got To Love Somebody Today", most of the songs on it just don't hold up to their 1979 material; except this easy going cut that closes the album out. "Let's Go on Vacation" is a cool mid-tempo groove with solid drumming from the late Tony Thompson, great bass playing from the late Bernard Edwards, and excellent sing-a-long vocals from Debbie, Joni, Kim, and Kathy Sledge on the hook. While youngest sister Kathy sang lead on most

of their hits, second to oldest sister Debbie handles the lead here (the oldest sister, Carol Sledge, wasn't in the group).

Yet the sisters weren't the only ladies who shined on this track. The female Chic strings trio of Cheryl Hong, Karen Milne, and Valerie Heywood give a noteworthy performance throughout "Let's Go on Vacation", and it's one of the last cuts they were heard on before going on a permanent vacation from the Chic Organization in September of 1980. The song itself had a brief second life when it was included in the 1982 film *Soup for One*, to which Chic had their final hit with the title track. "Let's Go on Vacation" was unjustly overlooked at the time of its release, but it earns a spot on my 500 song All-Star Team.

NOTE: "Thinking of You" from 1979's *We Are Family* album also deserves mention, while the 1984 Bernard Edwards & Nile Rodgers remix of "Lost In Music" just missed making The MC 500.

#361 Shakilya Poor Righteous Teachers

Writers: Timothy Grimes, Tony Depula
Producer: Tony Depula
Year: 1990/Album: Holy Intellect
Label: Profile
Memorable line:
"She starts to kiss on my neck,
it's time to give me that butt!"

In the late '80s & early '90s, most Afrocentric/conscious rappers usually made at least one song that celebrated women instead of attacking them. Sampling

"Be Alright" by Roger Troutman's group Zapp three years before 2Pac's "Keep Ya Head Up", this one from PRT is a good example of that. "Rock Dis Funcky Joint" was their big hit, but to me, "Shakilya" was the best song done by the trio of Wise Intelligent, Culture Freedom, and DJ Father Shaheed. I first heard it in June of 1990 on WHPK just after I'd graduated from high school, and it had that cool "young summer love in the hood" vibe to it. Poor Righteous Teachers did a totally different, reggae influenced version of "Shakilya" the following year. While that was good, the original on their debut album *Holy Intellect* is the superior version. Sadly, group member Father Shaheed died from a motorcycle accident on Memorial Day in 2014.

#360 Just Like Daddy 2Pac aka Makaveli featuring The Outlawz

Writers: Tupac Shakur,
Tyrone Wrice, Malcolm Greenridge,
Rufus Cooper III, Yafeu Fula
Producer: Hurt-M-Badd
Year: 1996

Album: *The Don Killuminati-The 7 Day Theory*Label: Death Row/Interscope
Memorable line:

"Dedicatin' slow jams on the radio."

Tupac's double disc *All Eyez on Me* was the party CD of 1996. The posthumous album *The Don Killuminati-The 7 Day Theory* released under the alias "Makaveli" was that year's dark masterpiece. The whole thing is sort of eerie

due to Tupac's murder, but out of all the tracks on it, this is the one that always got me the most. The lyrics, the vocal hook, and the track produced by Hurt-M-Badd all fit together perfectly, and fit the overall mood of the CD. Haunting and compelling, "Just Like Daddy" is a great song that shows the depth of both Tupac and the whole Makaveli project.

#359 Cowboy Song Thin Lizzy

Writers: Phil Lynott, Brian Downey
Producer: John Alcock
Year: 1976/Album: Jailbreak
Label: Vertigo/Mercury
Memorable line:
"Lord all these southern girls they seem the same!"

A half Black-half Irish man singing about the life of Texas cowboys? Not quite. Thin Lizzy band leader Phil Lynott used the American cowboy lifestyle as a metaphor for the life of a musician; which also works well in describing the life of a radio personality on the road away from home. I first heard "Cowboy Song" in 1999, but didn't really get it until I left home for my first everyday radio job later that year. It became a personal anthem when I got hired to work at KKDA-FM (K104) in Dallas, Texas back in 2001. A great poetic performance with the usual killer twin guitar work from Scott Gorham and Brian Robertson.

#358 Cocomotion El Coco

Writers: W. Michael Lewis,
Laurin Rinder, Merria Ross
Producers: W. Michael Lewis, Laurin Rinder
Year: 1977/Album: *Cocomotion*Label: AVI Records
Memorable line: "Do it!"

Thanks to the Joel Whitburn Record Research book on the Billboard Disco/ Dance charts, I know this was a big club hit when it was originally released in 1977. But I also know firsthand that it's a classic of Chicago's House music scene, and that's how I was introduced to "Cocomotion". El Coco was a studio group assembled by producers W. Michael Lewis and Laurin Rinder. Their 1976 hit "Let's Get It Together" was also played by Chicago House DJs in the '80s, as were other Rinder & Lewis productions under different aliases like "Anger" (from their Seven Deadly Sins album), "Le Spank", and "You Can Get Off On the Music" (the latter two under the name Le Pamplemousse). "Le Spank" was actually their biggest R&B and disco hit during the '70s, but "Cocomotion" was the most popular on the Chicago House scene in the '80s. While the opening bass line is unforgettable, it's the breakdown section from 3:30 to 5:10 that gets the song in this book. If you listen carefully, you can hear someone whispering "do it! do it!" at about the 4:54 mark. The whole thing has a dreamy vibe to it that I'm sure was perfect for cocaine using club goers in the late '70s. I'll pass on the drugs, but I'll take "Cocomotion" for my 500 song All-Star Team.

NOTE: There's also an instrumental version of this called "Cocomotion '79".

#357 I Don't Believe You Want to Get Up and Dance (Oops!) The Gap Band

Writers: Lonnie Simmons, Ronnie Wilson, Charles Wilson, Robert Wilson, Rudolph Taylor Producer: Lonnie Simmons Year: 1979-80

Album: *The Gap Band II*Label: Mercury
Memorable line:

"Jack and Jill went up the hill to have a little fun. Stupid Jill forgot her pill and now they have a son!"

Long before he was "Uncle Charlie", Charlie Wilson was the lead singer and keyboard player for the Gap Band; a large funk band that was trimmed down to a core trio of brothers Charlie, Ronnie, and Robert Wilson. This Gap Band jam is one of my absolute childhood favorites, but to this day I still don't understand why they gave it this long title instead of just calling it "Oops Upside Your Head". More than any other band at the time, the Gap Band had no shame in "borrowing" from Parliament-Funkadelic and Bootsy for some of their early hits (Bootsy is allegedly a cousin of the Gap Band's Wilson brothers). This one not only uses fun P-Funk styled phrases, it also takes a whole section of music from The Brides of Funkenstein's 1978 hit "Disco to Go" at the 7:27 mark. Either way, "Oops!" is a fun song that was perfect for kids like me back then. It also made *The Gap Band II* their first of four straight Gold or Platinum albums.

#356

When the World Is Running Down You Make the Best of What's Still Around The Police

Writer: Sting
Producers: The Police, Nigel Gray
Year: 1980/Album: Zenyatta Mondatta
Label: A&M
Memorable line:
"James Brown on the T.A.M.I. show,
same tape I've had for years."

It's always funny to me when I hear someone say the new gadget they bought not that long ago is already broken, or that they have to get the new version of the phone that replaces the one they just got a few months back. Meanwhile I'm playing music with the same speakers, receiver, and equalizer I bought over 20 years ago, and they all still work fine. I definitely believe in upgrading when it's needed, but too many people today waste too much money due to the "gotta have the new one" mentality. I'm not one of them, and for me, the lyrics written by bassist/vocalist Sting for this song speak to that attitude (Sting himself said in an interview that it's about being the only survivor of a nuclear holocaust with all your favorite things still in tact). Musically speaking, "When the World Is Running Down" is a cool dance track that's one of the highlights of the album that broke The Police in America. Andy Summers brought the reggae vibe with his guitar work, and I love the sound of Stewart Copeland's drums. The fact that this and the classic "Voices Inside My Head" weren't even singles from the Zenyatta Mondatta album is a testament to how strong this band really was.

#355 I'm Mad Pleasure

Writers: Dan Brewster, Pleasure
Producer: Wayne Henderson
Year: 1976/Album: Accept No Substitutes
Label: Fantasy
Memorable line:
"It's like trying to go up a down escalator.
Cause no matter how hard I try,
seems like I'm never gonna make it."

Written by trombonist Dan Brewster and driven by the guitar work of Marlon McClain, this song is about a guy being frustrated by the wishy-washy attitude of his woman. Anyone can relate to that, but the "Memorable line" takes it beyond relationships and into life in general, which is why I can relate to it. "I'm Mad" is just one of the many excellent cuts from this band, and the second of four from their sophomore album *Accept No Substitutes* to make my 500.

#354 You Can't Hide From Yourself Teddy Pendergrass

Writers: Kenneth Gamble, Leon Huff
Producers: Kenneth Gamble, Leon Huff
Year: 1977/Album: *Teddy Pendergrass*Label: Philadelphia International
Memorable line:
"Understand who and what you are
before you can go any further."

As a kid I was well aware of Teddy Pendergrass. Hits like "Close the Door" and "Turn Off the Lights" from his 2nd & 3rd solo albums made him *the* biggest Black male singer in the country in the late '70s. But it wasn't until the height of the Chicago House music scene in 1985 & '86 that I found out about his self-titled first album from 1977. The album's opening track, "You Can't Hide From Yourself", was one of the most popular cuts on the House scene at that time, and it's one of three songs from his solo debut to make my 500. A great dance tune with meaningful lyrics, this song is an example of why the phrase "there's a message in the music" became synonymous with the Philly International label.

#353 T.N.T AC/DC

Writers: Angus Young,
Malcolm Young, Bon Scott
Producers: Harry Vanda, George Young
Year: 1976/Album: *High Voltage*Label: ATCO/Atlantic
Memorable line:
"Women to the left of me...
women to the right!"

From its opening military-like "Oi!" chant to its "horny man on the prowl" lyrics, "T.N.T" is another example of why this band is still so popular. They make fun kick-ass music that's great for working out or getting ready for a night on the town. "T.N.T" was actually the title track to the band's second album in 1975, but their first two albums were only released in their native Australia and New Zealand. When they landed an international record deal in 1976, tracks from both albums were compiled and re-released as *High Voltage* (which was also the title of their first Australian album). This is the highest ranking AC/DC song on the 500 with original vocalist Bon Scott, who died in 1980, but the band has two more entries with his replacement Brian Johnson.

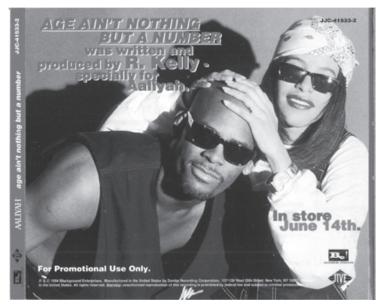
#352 Get On Up, Get On Down Roy Ayers

Writers: Roy Ayers,
Bruce Fisher, Stanely Richardson
Producer: Roy Ayers
Year: 1978/Album: *You Send Me*Label: Polydor
Memorable line:
"Let's make tonight our night."

Although it's best known for the hit title track and "Can't You See Me", "Get On Up, Get On Down" was actually the single released from Roy's *You Send Me* album (one of his best I might add). My sisters had the record at home when it was out, but I slept on this particular cut until I listened to it on the 2 disc CD anthology *Evolution* in 2001. The lyrics and music capture the vibe of the late '70s disco era perfectly, and I could easily see Ayers spinning around on the dance floor in his trademark hat with a female when this was out. I met the man himself in 1998, and he was about as cool and energetic as this song would imply.

#351 Young Nation Aaliyah

Writer: Robert Kelly
Producer: R. Kelly
Year: 1994
Album: Age Ain't Nothing But a Number
Label: Blackground/Jive
Memorable line:
"Keepin' it smooth with a jazz attitude."



Back cover of the advanced promotional copy of Aaliyah's debut CD

Age Ain't Nothing But a Number

Timbaland and Missy may have given her a defined musical identity with "One In a Million", but let us not forget that it was R. Kelly who got Aaliyah's

career started in the right direction. His writing and production on her first CD, *Age Ain't Nothing But a Number*, fit perfectly with her angelic voice, and for my money, that was her best full length release. It also captured the vibe of being young in summer 1994 extremely well, and this track might celebrate that feeling better than any other song on the disc. Rollin' down Chicago's Lake Shore Drive to picnics at 63rd & Hayes, the South Shore Country Club, and to my Nupe Friday Clements' backyard parties, were all a part of that summer for me. It was a great time to be young, and the Funkadelic "One Nation Under a Groove" inspiration doesn't hurt either. One Nation/Young Nation.

#350 True Love

Writers: James Williams, Clarence Satchell,
LeRoy Bonner, Marshall Jones, William Beck,
Ralph Middlebrooks, Marvin Pierce
Producers: Tight Corp.
Year: 1978/Album: *Riding High*Label: She/Atlantic
Memorable line:
"True love can't be disputed,
there's no building where it's instituted."

Faze-O was one of the funk bands to emerge out of Dayton, Ohio in the 1970s. They were signed to the Ohio Players' She label under the Atlantic Records umbrella, and are best known for their big hit "Riding High" (my second favorite song to drive to). I had the *Riding High* album in my collection since 1993, but aside from the classic title track, I didn't really listen to the

whole thing until late 2011. I soon realized that I'd been sleeping on a damn good album, and this is the first of three songs from it to make my 500. I like the catchy background vocals, the keyboard work from Keith Harrison, and the lead singing from Ralph "Love" Aikens, who brings the whole thing home. "True Love" is another example of why whole albums were essential to '70s funk bands.

NOTE: Despite the writer's credits going to the members of the Ohio Players, Keith Harrison maintains that this and all the songs on the *Riding High* album were written by the members of Faze-O.

#349 A Funky Song Ripple

Writers: Keith Samuels, Ripple Inc.
Producer: Dee Ervin
Year: 1973-74/Album: Ripple
Label: GRC
Memorable line:
"When I sing funky music, oh Lord I cry!"

Most likely you've probably never heard of the band Ripple. But if you remember rapper Special Ed, Kid 'N Play, or are familiar with deep house or disco, then you've definitely heard them before. Ripple was an integrated funk band from Michigan, and they have three songs on my 500; two of which are from their self-titled 1973 debut album. I got that record while I was working at Dr. Wax Records in Chicago's Hyde Park neighborhood in 1998-'99, but I first heard this cut in late 1987 or early '88. It was played on WHPK when the hosts of their rap shows decided to spotlight a bunch of underground funk

from the '70s one night. The drums, horns, chant, and lead vocals all hit hard on "A Funky Song", and it may be the band's best song overall. A lost gem that I'm glad rap producers found in the late '80s.

#348 Hypnotized Fleetwood Mac

Writer: Robert Welch
Producers: Martin Birch, Fleetwood Mac
Year: 1973/Album: *Mystery to Me*Label: Reprise/Warner Bros.
Memorable line:
"Seems like a dream."

I have to thank Bob Stroud at Chicago station WDRV 97.1 "The Drive" for playing this one around 2003. The dreamy vocals, lyrics, and guitar work are from the late Bob Welch, while Mick Fleetwood gives a solid performance on drums. A great mysterious piece of work, "Hypnotized" is an often overlooked jewel in the Fleetwood Mac catalog. This is mainly because it's from the period before Lindsey Buckingham & Stevie Nicks joined and helped the band reach mega platinum status. Nonetheless, this is one of the coolest cuts I've ever heard, and it gets a spot on my 500 song All-Star Team.

NOTE: The Pointer Sisters did a decent cover version of "Hypnotized" on their 1978 album *Energy*.



EWF Spirit album with rare promotional sticker

#347 Imagination Earth, Wind & Fire

Writers: Maurice White,
Charles Stepney, Philip Bailey
Producers: Maurice White, Charles Stepney
Year: 1976/Album: Spirit
Label: Columbia
Memorable line:
"Imagining you, imagining me,
the beauty we both can see."

I first heard this some time around 1980 when my cousin Donald let me borrow his copy of the EWF *Spirit* album. To say I was totally knocked out

by this song would be an understatement. Easily one of the band's greatest creations, "Imagination" was a hit, but the fact that it wasn't even a single is another example of how deep the EWF catalog really is. A great performance from Philip Bailey on lead vocals with a nice unexpected change about two thirds of the way through.

This Tuesday Night From 6 to 9pm Marcus Chapman Presents... The Music of on 93.5 FM WKDI

1994 radio show flyer and I Want You deluxe CD

#346 I Want You Marvin Gaye

Writers: Leon Ware, T-Boy Ross
Producer: Leon Ware
Year: 1976/Album: *I Want You*Label: Tamla/Motown
Memorable line:
"A one way love is just a fantasy."

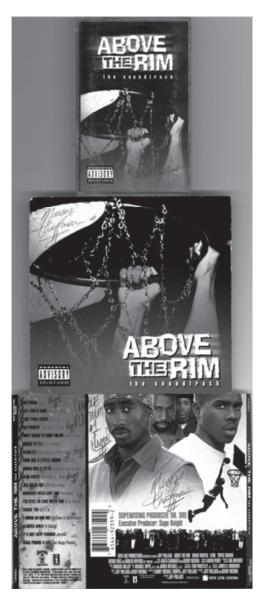
The funkiest and most erotic work of his career, both the song and album *I Want You* is an exploration of the love Marvin Gaye had for his second wife Janis Hunter. The sexual nature of it is obvious, but finding the love and commitment aspect takes a deeper exploration of the lyrics. "I Want You" was originally supposed to be for writer/producer Leon Ware's own solo project, until Motown founder Berry Gordy convinced Ware it would be perfect for Marvin. Marvin Gaye himself then talked Ware into doing his whole album, and both the album & single went to number 1 on the *Billboard* R&B charts.

As great as it was upon its initial release, the entire *I Want You* experience went to an even higher level when the 2 disc "Deluxe Edition" came out in 2003. With good alternate takes of every song on the album, plus some extended versions and excellent cuts from the sessions that didn't make the original LP, it *easily* gets my vote for the best re-issue of its kind. Download it or get a physical copy. Trust me; you'll be glad you did!

#345 Ridin' Slipin' & Slidin' Tha Dogg Pound with Mz. So'Sentral

Writers: Delmar Arnaud, Ricardo Brown
Producer: Daz
Year: 1995/Album: Dogg Food
Label: Death Row/Interscope
Memorable line:
"All you busters, riding 'round,
you don't wanna, see Dogg Pound."

Whether you liked their lyrics or not, there was no denying that the G-Funk beats created by Daz for his and Kurupt's group Tha Dogg Pound were some of the best ever made in hip-hop. And since I've always been a "music first, lyrics second" type of dude, their album *Dogg Food* is still one of my favorite CDs of all-time. "Ridin' Slipin' and Slidin'" is one of the album's best tracks. It's the first of three cuts from *Dogg Food* to make my All-Star Team, and the first of four Dogg Pound cuts I chose overall. Mz. So'Sentral provided some good vocals throughout the song, but I also dug the background vocals from Kevin Varnado. He makes reference to Dayton, Ohio band Faze-O's classic "Riding High" on the hook, and does a pretty good imitation of Ohio Players lead singer Sugarfoot towards the end. By the time it fades out, "Ridin' Slipin' and Slidin'" establishes itself as a super cool gangsta groove worthy of its place in The MC 500.



The *Above the Rim* cassette, with the front and back covers of the CD.

The cassette had three bonus tracks not included on the CD.

#344 Afro Puffs The Lady of Rage

Writers: Delmar Arnaud, Robin Allen
Producers: Dr. Dre, Daz
Year: 1994/Album: Above the Rim: the Soundtrack
Label: Death Row/Interscope
Memorable line:
"Let me loosen up my bra strap."

She only had one hit, but what a hit it was. "Afro Puffs" is one of the iconic songs from the peak of Death Row Records' reign at the top of hip-hop in the mid-1990s. I was into this the minute I heard it on the *Above the Rim* soundtrack, and it's just one more reason that's my third favorite album of all-time. Unfortunately for Rage, the buzz she had from this instant classic was long gone by the time she dropped her little noticed album three years later; after Death Row's time was over. But in 1994, "Afro Puffs" was on *fire*, and my only complaint is that they didn't use the original version of it in the video.

#343 You Sexy Thing Hot Chocolate

Writers: Errol Brown, Tony Wilson
Producer: Mickie Most
Year: 1975-76/Album: Hot Chocolate
Label: Big Tree/Atlantic
Memorable line:
"Yesterday I was one of the lonely people,
now you're lying close to me, givin' it to me!"

Another childhood favorite that reminds me of the clock radio in my parents' room because I'm pretty sure that's where I first heard this. "You Sexy Thing" is one of those songs that could've only been made in the 1970s, and it captures the sound and vibe of that era. Yet this track from the London based interracial band Hot Chocolate has actually outlasted that era. "You Sexy Thing" has been used in TV commercials, and pop oldies stations like KLUV in Dallas play it a lot. Writer/lead singer Errol Brown (who was one of the few bald headed Black men of the era aside from Isaac Hayes) gave a memorable vocal performance that's still entertaining, and I turn it up every time I hear it.

On a side note, in 2006 I heard a parody of "You Sexy Thing" on the syndicated Dr. Dimento show called "You Chesty Thing" about a woman with big boobs. "Now you're lying next to me, 40 double D!" and "I love the way you shake 'em honey!" were among the hilarious lines that were given.

#342 Given the Dog a Bone AC/DC

Writers: Angus Young,
Malcolm Young, Brian Johnson
Producer: Robert "Mutt" Lange
Year: 1980/Album: *Back in Black*Label: Atlantic
Memorable line:

"She's blowin' me crazy 'til my ammunition is dry!"

The second of the three tracks from the immortal *Back in Black* album to make my 500, "Given the Dog a Bone" is another high energy AC/DC track. The drums from Phil Rudd, bass from Cliff Williams, guitar work from the Young brothers, and vocals from Brian Johnson all kick major ass here. As for the subject matter, the phrase "she's usin' her head again" and the "Memorable line" I chose both say all that need to be said.

#341 No Head, No Backstage Pass Funkadelic

Writers: George Clinton, Ron Bykowski
Producer: George Clinton
Year: 1975/Album: Let's Take It to the Stage
Label: Westbound/20th Century
Memorable line:
"Not by the hairs of my chinny chin chin.
If you ain't givin' head you ain't gettin' in."

Many artists have talked about oral sex in songs; particularly since NWA's "Just Don't Bite It" in 1990. But even before hip-hop music existed, and before AC/DC dropped the previous track at #342, my boys in Parliament-Funkadelic were the first to make a whole song about this subject. The lyrics to "No Head, No Backstage Pass" could easily fit a rap song, yet it was the music that made it to a rap record when Funkadelic guitarist Ron Bykowski's riff was sampled for Eric B & Rakim's "Lyrics of Fury" in 1988. Fittingly both records were added to my collection in the same week that summer. More than any other Funkadelic album, *Let's Take It to the Stage* is the one that directly links the band to hip-hop, and this is the first of four songs from it on The MC 500.

#340 6 Minutes of Pleasure LL Cool J

Writers: James Todd Smith, Marlon Williams
Producer: Marley Marl
Year: 1990/Album: *Mama Said Knock You Out*Label: Def Jam/Columbia
Memorable line:
"I know why you're here...
I ain't sayin' nothin."

The hit single "Around the Way Girl" wasn't the only smoothed out cut on LL's classic *Mama Said Knock You Out* album. A trio of male vocalists credited as "The Flex" sang on that classic, and they also performed on this cut. Cool J's vocal approach here is a complete 360 degree switch from "the LL growl" used on his more aggressive material. He's damn near whispering over this track, and the laid back vibe is accentuated by the often used sample of Isaac Hayes' piano from "Ike's Mood". The horn break (which is actually a keyboard) played by Darren Lighty of "The Flex" also adds a nice touch to the track. "6 Minutes of Pleasure" was easily one of the album's highlights, and to this day I still think it's a shame Def Jam released an inferior remix to this as the 4th single and made a video for it, instead of doing the video for the original version. A lost gem from Cool J that deserved to be a hit.

#339 Let's Get Down (Radio edit w/o rap) Tony Toni Toné

Writers: Raphael Saadiq, George Archie, David Blake
Producers: DJ Quik, G One, Raphael Saadiq
Year: 1996
Label: Mercury
Memorable line:
"Who is your friend? She don't look nice.
But I know she will later on tonight."

I liked these dudes from the first time I heard them in 1988. Over four albums they gave us some of the best music of the era, and out of all their hits, this is the one that makes my 500. I was totally into the great club scene Chicago had at the time, and "Let's Get Down" had "party mode" written all over it. The track was absolute fire, and lead singer Raphael Saadiq delivered the verses in a melody similar to Nirvana's grunge rock classic "Smells Like Teen Spirit". As much as I liked DJ Quik, his verses messed up the flow of the song, and the "no rap" version released to radio stations was better than the one with him on the Tony's *House of Musid* CD (the promo only radio edit we played on WGCI didn't even have Quik talking on the intro). A "feel good" song that still feels good.

#338 It's a Love Thing The Whispers

Writers: William Shelby, Dana Meyers
Producers: The Whispers and Dick Griffey
with Leon Sylvers
Year: 1981/Album: *Imagination*Label: Solar
Memorable line:
"I feel that pounding in my heart
when you call my name."

Another group I've always liked. Twins with thick mustaches, a big dude with a big beard, one guy with my name, and another with glasses thrown in for good measure, made it pretty easy for the Whispers to stand out. But "It's a Love Thing" is all about the bass guitar for me. Played by Leon Sylvers (who also co-produced this track), it's one of the most aggressive bass lines I've ever heard, and it drives the song very well. This was the first single from the first album the Whispers did after finally finding major success after years in the business. The celebratory vibe that often comes from "the album after" is evident here, and it's one of the reasons this track connected with me. The Whispers would continue cranking out hits for about another decade, but "It's a Love Thing" is their contribution to The MC 500. I never knew they had a video for it, but you can find the original clip of it on YouTube.

#337 Saturday Nite Earth, Wind & Fire

Writers: Maurice White, Al McKay, Philip Bailey
Producers: Maurice White, Charles Stepney
Year: 1976/Album: Spirit
Label: Columbia
Memorable line:
"Tonight's the night for you to be,
biggest man in History!"



EWF Spirit album with rare promotional sticker

Another early childhood favorite of mine, years later I can still envision playing in the living room and hearing this come on the radio. Hearing the words

"Humpty Dumpty", "London bridges", and "Simon says" in the song definitely gave "Saturday Nite" that "fun for little kids" feeling, while the talking & laughing at the end made it sound like they were really at a party. It's all not what it seems though, as this is really a song about people using the popular party/disco scene to escape from problems instead of actually trying to solve them ("stop wastin' time & havin' fun"). It's still a feel good song regardless, and one of Earth, Wind & Fire's more overlooked hits.

#336 Slow Ride Beastie Boys

Writers: Adam Yauch, Adam Horovitz, Michael Diamond, Rick Rubin Producers: Rick Rubin, Beastie Boys Year: 1986-87/Album: *Licensed to Ill* Label: Def Jam/Columbia Memorable line:

"I got the trees in my mirror so my car won't smell!"

As I wrote in Sex Time And Radio Vol. 1 & 2: "Blueprint of a Radio Star", the Beastie Boys Licensed to Ill may be the most fun album in music history, and this is easily one of its most fun songs. It has everything that makes up the world of a teenage boy: school, girls, food, beer, cars, and mischief. The sped up music from the classic "Low Rider" by War adds to the silliness, while the Beasties' voices and rapping style makes the chaos even crazier. "Slow Ride" is a great snapshot of teen fun in the '80s. I still keep trees in my car mirror because of it.

#335 Dreaming About You The Blackbyrds

Writer: Kevin Toney
Producer: Donald Byrd
Year: 1977/Album: *Action*Label: Fantasy
Memorable line:
"I have visions of you."

With five good albums done under the tutelage of jazz legend Dr. Donald Byrd, including two while they were still students at DC's Howard University, the Blackbyrds are definitely one of my favorite bands. This mellow gem from the last of those five albums is the first of two songs from the group to make my 500. The keyboard work of Kevin Toney is the main highlight here, while Joe Hall and Keith Killgo also stand out on bass and drums respectively. Noteworthy contributions were also made by others who weren't actually members of the Blackbyrds. Eddie "Bongo" Brown did an excellent job on congas, Donald Byrd handled the trumpet solos, and six male vocalists credited as "The Block Boys Orchestra" sang the lyrics. "Dreaming About You" was sampled very effectively by Ice Cube's boys Da Lench Mob in 1992, while the drum & conga intro was used in 2000 for an Eminem cut that also made my 500. An awesome performance from the Blackbyrds that everyone should hear at least once.

NOTE: Another cut from the same album called "Mysterious Vibes" is equally hot.

#334 Happy People Brass Construction

Writer: Randy Muller Producer: Randy Muller Year: 1977

Album: Brass Construction III
Label: United Artist

Another great song from Brass Construction's third album that always makes me hit the repeat button. You can tell the band was feeling this because you can hear someone yelling "woo!" a bunch of times in the background throughout the song. The horns, drums, keyboards, bass, and vocal chant on "Happy People" are all great. The song was used as the basis for an electronic dance tune in 1996 called "Venus (Sunshine People)" by an act named Cheek. This is the first of two songs titled "Happy People" in the 500.

#333 You Ain't Seen Nothing Yet Bachman-Turner Overdrive

Writer: Randy Bachman
Producer: Randy Bachman
Year: 1974/Album: Not Fragile
Label: Mercury
Memorable line:
"She said 'any love is good love'.
So I took what I could get."

I don't remember this song or this band from when they were out, but since they were on Mercury Records, I always saw their albums promoted on the paper sleeves that held LPs by the Ohio Players, Bar-Kays, Con Funk Shun and other acts on the same label. I also knew this was a #1 pop hit from a #1 pop album because of several research books I owned, so naturally Bachman-Turner Overdrive were one of the first acts I checked out when I got into classic rock in 1998 & '99. "You Ain't Seen Nothing Yet" is another one of those fun "only in the '70s" songs that reminds me of being a little kid. As a result, I turn it up whenever I hear it, and I do a silly little dance to the chorus that no one will ever see.

#332 A Doggz Day Afternoon Tha Dogg Pound with Nate Dogg and Snoop

Writers: Delmar Arnaud, Ricardo Brown, Nathaniel Hale
Producer: Daz
Year: 1995/Album: Dogg Food
Label: Death Row
Memorable line:
"To a new plateau with mo' hoes!"

Musically speaking this is definitely one of the most P-Funk influenced G-Funk tracks ever made. While a lot of them used the keyboard bass introduced by Parliament-Funkadelic's Bernie Worrell on "Flash Light", "A Doggz Day Afternoon" also has the clap track first heard on that classic. The whole thing has a cold weather feel to it, making Kurupt's opening line about "the dead of winter" feel right on point. I always hit the repeat button on this short but funky one.

#331 Flying High The Blackbyrds

Writer: Keith Killgo
Producer: Donald Byrd
Year: 1975/Album: City Life
Label: Fantasy
Memorable line:
"Shoop shoop shoop,
shoobe doobe doop!"

The Blackbyrds' third album *City Life* is a masterpiece best known for the all-time classic opening track "Rock Creek Park" and the Top 5 single "Happy Music". "Flying High" was released about five months ahead of *City Life* as the band's follow-up to their first big R&B and Pop hit "Walking in Rhythm", and was the next to last track on the album. As much as I love all their songs, this one has something the others don't...the "shoobe doobe doop" vocal breakdown. That alone makes "Flying High" stand out to me, and makes it their highest placing song on my 500. Another great "feel good" cut from the '70s that a lot of people have never heard.

400 to 301 201

#330 The Memory Roy Ayers Ubiquity

Writers: Roy Ayers,
Edwin Birdsong, William Allen
Producer: Roy Ayers with William Allen,
James Green, and Edwin Birdsong
Year: 1976-77/Album: Vibrations
Label: Polydor
Memorable line:
"The memory keeps calling me back."

Even in a catalog full of great songs, "The Memory" stands out as one of Roy's best creations. He and the band Ubiquity were at their peak when they did this one. Special props have to go to co-writer Edwin Birdsong for providing the string ensemble. He's also credited on the album for lead & background vocals with Ayers, but I don't hear any other voices besides Roy's in the mix. The talking part towards the end shows Ayers at his coolest. A damn good song that deserved more exposure than it received upon release.

#329 At Your Best (You Are Love) (Gangstar Child Remix) Aaliyah

Writers: Ernie Isley, Chris Jasper, Marvin Isley,
Ronald Isley, O'Kelly Isley, Rudolph Isley
Producer: R. Kelly
Year: 1994
Label: Blackground Enterprise/Jive
Memorable line:
"If you're won-dering,
you gotta let me know, baby."

The best songs to remake are hits that have been forgotten; particularly if that same artist had bigger hits that still get played. The original 1976 version of "(At Your Best) You Are Love" by the Isley Brothers fits that description perfectly, thus making it an excellent song to cover. The version on Aaliyah's debut album was very similar to the Isley's original. The remix sounded more like a brand new song instead of a cover, and it's the version that I've always preferred. R Kelly's production is on point, and his incorporation of the Mtume hit "You, Me, and He" toward the end made it even better. Whenever this came up on my radio shows I always made sure it played to the very end where Aaliyah took that last breath. The video brings that home even more.

NOTE: There was also a "Stepper's Ball Remix" on the original CD single with the same track, different lyrics, the Mtume "You, Me, and He" hook, and additional vocals from R. Kelly.

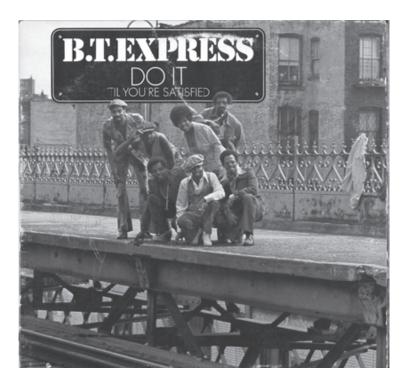
#328 Can't Keep My Hands Off You The Bar-Kays

Writers: James Alexander, Larry Dodson,
Allen Jones, Winston Stewart, Michael Beard,
Charles Allen, Harvey Henderson,
Lloyd Smith, Frank Thompson
Producer: Allen Jones
Year: 1977-78
Album: Flying High On Your Love
Label: Mercury
Memorable line:
"You sexy lady, it's so a shame,
that you won't let me, do my thang!"

A somewhat overlooked track from the Bar-Kays' best overall album, "Can't Keep My Hands Off You" is a fun song (it's opening notes also owe a musical debt to "Runnin' From the Devil" from the Ohio Players 1974 album *Fire*). The band was definitely in good form here, and singer Larry Dodson's performance totally captured the energy of a horny young man trying to get some. Yet despite the title, the upbeat music, and the vibe, it's really about a subject that is the opposite of fun for a guy: sexual frustration. As I wrote in the "Touch Me, Tease Me" chapter of *Sex Time And Radio Vol. 1 & 2: "Blueprint of a Radio Star"*, that frustration is one of the key components that makes up the male sex drive. Having a woman who's obviously interested in you, but not quite interested enough to go "all the way", is not fun at all. A man has to make up for that at some point with somebody, if and when he gets the opportunity. I call that process "Sexorcism", but that's another chapter in another book.

#327 This House is Smokin' B.T. Express

Writers: George Burton, Joe C. Santino
Producer: Trade Martin
Year: 1974
Album: Do It ('Til You're Satisfied)
Label: Roadshow/Scepter



My parents had the B.T. Express *Do It ('Til You're Satisfied)* album at home. Its cover is one of the most memorable images of my childhood, and I still think about it whenever I happen to be waiting on a bus or a train. But aside

from the classic title track, I didn't actually hear the whole record until I started really collecting heavily in late 1988. It's easily one of my favorite albums of all-time, and "This House is Smokin" is the first of three cuts from it on my All-Star Team, and the first of five B.T. songs on the 500. The bass guitar playing from Louis Risbrook, and the horns from sax players Bill Risbrook and Carlos Ward, are absolute *monsters* on this track. Despite the band being accused of copying the guitar line from the 1973 Kool & the Gang hit "Funky Stuff", "This House" is hardcore Godzilla funk at its finest.

#326 I Ain't Tha 1 NWA

Writers: O'Shea Jackson, Randy Muller
Producers: Dr. Dre, DJ Yella
Year: 1988-89
Album: Straight Outta Compton
Label: Ruthless/Priority
Memorable line:
"Give you money why bother?

'Cause you know I'm lookin' nothin' like your father."

Ice Cube's solo spot on the classic *Straight Outta Compton* album, "I Ain't Tha 1" gave an interesting description of relationships between young males and females that revolved around money. Cube openly asks a question that many others have pondered by saying "sometimes I used to wonder, how the hell a ugly dude get a fine girls number?!" He concludes that the answer is financial, but not necessarily beneficial to the man. Guys who paid for girls to get their hair and nails done were given the unfortunate information that these girls would "let you show 'em off, but when it comes to sex, they got a bad cough

or a headache, it's all give and no take, run outta money, and watch your heart break". Between the verses, girls talked about getting brothers for all the money they could without having sex. I later heard some older girls on my block say that guys had to "come out the pocket to knock it"; which was a line from the song. But as Cube said: "if you got enough game you'll get her name and her number" without having to play by those rules. Ice Cube kicked the knowledge, I paid attention, and I've *neven* used money to get women. Period. You can't juice Marcus, girl, 'cause I ain't tha 1.

Randy Muller apparently wasn't either. Although "The Message (Inspiration)" from his band Brass Construction was used for this NWA cut, Muller wasn't given a co-writer credit when "I Ain't Tha 1" was originally released. That has since changed, and both this and "The Message" (at #179) earned spots on The MC 500.

#325 True to the Game Ice Cube

Writers: O'Shea Jackson, Lonnie Simmons,
Raymond Calhoun, Charles Wilson
Producers: Ice Cube, Sir Jinx
Year: 1991/Album: *Death Certificate*Label: Priority
Memorable line:
"And you might have a heart attack
when you find out
the Black folks don't want you back."

One of the biggest highlights of Ice Cube's *Death Certificate* album, "True to the Game" might be the best combination of street knowledge and

consciousness in hip-hop history. Cube pulled no punches in his examination of Black folks who have a problem with being Black. This was emphasized by the sample of Queen Latifah saying "run-a-way" from her debut single being used in the background at certain points in the song to signify Blacks running away from their own identity. The second verse dealt specifically with rappers trying to crossover to pop, and the "Memorable line" I chose spoke of the fate those dudes eventually faced during that era (check out the video to get the full impact of the song's lyrics). Then and now "True to the Game" remains my philosophy, and it came in handy in 1995 when I was told I would "never be Marcus Chapman" on the radio in Chicago. Obviously it didn't quite turn out that way. No sell out.

#324 Wild Mountain Honey Steve Miller Band

Writer: Steve McCarty
Producer: Steve Miller
Year: 1976/Album: Fly Like an Eagle
Label: Capitol
Memorable line:
"You run for the money.
You don't even know about wild mountain honey."

Being from a big city, songs that come from a small town or out in the woods perspective seemingly wouldn't appeal to me. But somehow I've always been able to imagine what it's like to live somewhere small, and the time I spent in Iowa during the late '70s & '80s certainly helps that. "Wild Mountain Honey" is definitely not a big city song, yet it's one that I easily connect with. Keyboards & synthesizers are used to the highest level of beauty on

this mellow gem. It's an introspective plea about appreciating nature, and not selling your soul for financial gain. A peaceful musical journey from a classic multi-platinum album.

#323 Whole Lotta Love Led Zeppelin

Writers: John Bonham, John Paul Jones,
Jimmy Page, Robert Plant, Willie Dixon
Producer: Jimmy Page
Year: 1969/Album: Led Zeppelin II
Label: Atlantic
Memorable line:
"Way way down inside,
I'm gonna give you my love.
I'm gonna give you every inch of my love!"

There are plenty of sexually explicit songs, but when it comes to the combination of sound and lyrics, this may be the most powerful musical expression of the young male sex drive that's ever been recorded. "Whole Lotta Love" is not about wanting, hoping, wishing, or being optimistic about what *might* happen with a woman; it's about what's *going* to happen. "I'm gonna give you my love", and "love" ain't romantic here. The middle section sounds like a wild sex act, while the last part takes it over the top like an explosion. This is "rock star love"; something I personified to a certain degree around the time I got into this band's music in late 1998 & '99 at age 25. Pure thrust and power.

NOTE: Also check out the track "You Need Love" recorded by blues legend Muddy Waters in 1962. The song's composer, Willie Dixon, eventually sued Led Zeppelin and was added to the writing credits for "Whole Lotta Love".

#322 Bouncy Lady Pleasure

Writer: Donald Hepburn
Producer: Wayne Henderson
Year: 1975/Album: *Dust Yourself Off*Label: Fantasy
Memorable line:
"Don't it feeeel goooood?!"

Best known today for the drum break at the end, "Bouncy Lady" has been used many times; including for the cipher on the past few BET Hip-Hop Awards. I first heard pieces of this in 1987 when it was used for the underground rap hit "You Know How to Reach Us" by The Kings of Pressure (#248 on the 500). It re-surfaced again in 1988 for a hit by DJ Jazzy Jeff & the Fresh Prince aka Will Smith, and again in 1990 via Def Jam rap group 3rd Bass. But even without those, or the other numerous samples from it, "Bouncy Lady" is a great song in its own right, thus it makes my 500. Special props go to lead singer Sherman Davis and drummer Bruce Carter for their outstanding performances. Carter is the only deceased member of this great band.

#321 Presence of a Brain Parliament

Writers: George Clinton, Garry Shider
Producer: George Clinton
Year: 1974/Album: *Up For the Down Stroke*Label: Casablanca
Memorable line:
"You can tell he's a thinker,
by the far away look in his eyes."

George Clinton and his Parliament-Funkadelic crew became hugely successful through classic dance tracks like "Tear the Roof Off the Sucker", "Flash Light", "One Nation Under a Groove", "Aqua Boogie", "(not just) Knee Deep", and "Atomic Dog". But this lesser known cut from their *Up For the Down Stroke* album is a good example of the band's philosophical depth that you won't get if all you know are their big hits. The final refrain even shows a spiritual side not often associated with P-Funk. Musically it comes off more like folk than funk, but that's one of the beautiful things about funk bands; they had no problem mixing elements of any other styles of music into their own creations, and the results were often refreshing. "Presence of a Brain" is the first Parliament song on my 500. Trust me; it's not the last.

#320 Jimbrowski Jungle Brothers featuring Red Alert

Writers: Nathaniel Hall,
Michael Small, Sammy Burwell
Producers: Jungle Brothers
Year: 1987/Album: Straight Out the Jungle
Label: Idlers/Warlock
Memorable line:
"So when you're feelin' blue,
don't front on the Jimmy. Why?
'Cause Jimmy can help yooooou!"

So right after the first Parliament song in the 500 comes the first rap song to ever sample George Clinton's other major band: Funkadelic. The drum break that starts "Good Old Music" from Funkadelic's 1970 debut album was sped up and used as the driving force for the Jungle Brothers' debut single 17 years later. The original drums were played by the late Ramon "Tiki" Fulwood, and would be used many more times for cuts by The D.O.C., Roxanne Shante, and Ice-T just to name a few. But none of those songs were as witty and funny as this one from the Jungle Brothers. Their use of Jimmie "JJ" Walker's comedy album, and the sexual subject matter were also brilliant, or should I say "Dy-no-MITE!" Thanks again to the rap shows on Chicago's WHPK because I may not have ever heard "Jimbrowski" without them.

NOTE: Although the opening drum break from the 1981 Funkadelic song "You'll Like it Too" was used by Schoolly D, MC Breeze, and Eric B. & Rakim prior to the release of "Jimbrowski", that track was recorded by three vocalists who left the P-Funk camp to form a different group that they named

Funkadelic. No one from the actual Parliament-Funkadelic band was involved with "You'll Like It Too", including P-Funk leader George Clinton, thus "Jimbrowski" was the first hip-hop cut to sample actual Funkadelic.

#319 Touch and Go (New Mix) Ecstasy, Passion & Pain featuring Barbara Roy

Writers: Norman Harris,
Allan Felder, Bunny Sigler
Producer: Bobby Martin
Remix by Tony Smith and Danny Krivit
Year: 1986
Label: Sunnyview
Memorable line:
"You claim to be my man!"

It's summer 1986 and I've just graduated from 8th grade. My classmate Pat Doyle, who lives around the block, takes me over to 91st & Luella to hang out with some of his friends; including several attractive girls who are already in high school. One of the girls is friends with a guy named James who knows some of my cousins. He went with us to a party on 88th & Oglesby the previous February where we heard a DJ named Pharris Thomas for the first time. James borrowed \$2 from me that night so he could get into the party in exchange for a kiss from his attractive, well developed high school girlfriend. He didn't have the \$2 he owed me that day in '86, but he did have a new tape of DJ Ron Hardy from the Music Box with several cuts on it that were new

to the House music scene. This was the first song on that tape, and it left a strong impression on me. In fact, this is the first of five cuts I heard on that tape to make my 500. I called them "The Class of '86", and they all became Chicago House music classics.

Out of those five classics, "Touch and Go" was the one that had the biggest and most immediate impact with Chicago girls. The combination of Ecstasy, Passion & Pain guitarist/lead singer Barbara Roy's passionate vocals, and the song's lyrics about "a dirty son of a gun" who she has a hard time leaving alone, struck a chord with the young women who were into the House music scene in '86 that still resonates to this day. "Touch and Go" was originally released a decade earlier on Roulette Records, but the "New mix" created by Tony Smith and Danny Krivit in 1986 is a masterpiece that trumps its 1976 counterpart by a long shot. Check out clips of both versions online to make the comparison. Also check out clips of this mixed gendered self-contained band performing their other hits "Good Things Don't Last Forever" and "Ask Me" on "Soul Train" in 1974 to see Barbara Roy's epic silver streaked afro.

#318 Love to the World LTD

Writers: Larry Mizell,
Fonce Mizell, Randy Mizell
Producers: Larry Mizell, Fonce Mizell
Year: 1976/Album: Love to the World
Label: A&M
Memorable line:
"Heaven help us!"

As a little kid, I always liked this band. "Holding On", "Back in Love Again", "Concentrate on You", "Jam", and the all-time classic "Love Ballad", were among the cuts I liked by them; all with future solo star Jeffrey Osborne on lead vocals. I also enjoyed their hit ballad "We Both Deserve Each Other's Love". But while that slow jam just missed The MC 500, this uptempo title track from their breakthrough third album is the sole LTD representative on my 500 song All-Star Team; thanks to the Chicago House music scene. Acquiring mixes by DJs Ron Hardy, Andre Hatchett, and Glenn Underground are what really made me pay attention to "Love to the World" since I don't remember it from when it was out in '76. Great bass guitar work by Henry Davis, and a timeless message that definitely resonates in today's world.

NOTE: Bobby Martin, who produced the previous entry "Touch and Go" in 1976, became LTD's producer the following year and helped make their next release their first Gold single and album.

#317 The Day the Ni**az Took Over Dr. Dre with Daz, RBX & Snoop Doggy Dogg

Writers: Andre Young, Eric Collins,
Calvin Broadus, Delmar Arnaud
Producer: Andre Young
Year: 1992-93/Album: *The Chronic*Label: Death Row/Interscope
Memorable line:
"Got a VCR in the back of my car
that I ganked from the Slawson Swap Meet.
And mothaf**s bet'not try to stop me!"

When it comes to the 1990s, "Nuthin' But a 'G' Thang" by Dr. Dre & Snoop Doggy Dogg was the song of the decade. But the songs that came before and after that classic on *The Chronid* represent that legendary CD from Dre on my 500. This cut not only talked about the 1992 L.A. riots, it used audio from footage that was filmed at the actual event, making it an even more legitimate documentation. What puts "The Day the Ni**az Took Over" over the top for me though is the bass line played by G-Funk collaborator Colin Wolfe after each verse. I could listen to that by itself over and over again. The segue from this song into "G Thang" on the CD is the best I've ever heard on any album. Only the transition from "My Adidas" to "Walk This Way" on Run-DMC's *Raising Hell* album equals it to me.

#316 Let It Ride Bachman-Turner Overdrive

Writers: Randy Bachman, Charles Fredric Turner
Producer: Randy Bachman
Year: 1974/Album: Bachman-Turner Overdrive II
Label: Mercury
Memorable line:
"And would you cry if I told you that I lied,
and would you say goodbye,
or would you let it ride?"

Another favorite from my classic rock excursion of 1998-99, "Let It Ride" was also a favorite of the '90s cartoon characters "Beavis & Butt-head", who occasionally played it on air guitar. I interpret this as a song about seeing the big picture and not sweating the small stuff. You may not like something someone does, but should you leave them alone altogether, or should you just "let it ride"? Sometimes the second option is better.

#315 We Had To Tear This Mothaf**ka Up Ice Cube

Writers: O'Shea Jackson, Lawrence Muggerud
Producer: DJ Muggs
Year: 1992/Album: *The Predator*Label: Priority
Memorable line:
"I told you it would happen and you heard it, read it.
But all you could call me was anti-Semitic."

A favorite of mine since I first heard it on Halloween night of '92, "We Had To Tear This Mothaf**ka Up" is the song that directly follows Cube's famous hit "It Was a Good Day" on his third full length album *The Predator*. Like Dr. Dre's song at #313, this was about the L.A. riots of 1992. But while Dre's cut had a documentary feel to it, Cube took a "revenge fantasy" route more fitting of an action movie. Taking out the officers found not guilty of beating Rodney King, and the jury who passed down the verdict, are the name of the game here. Explaining the reasons for the riot is part of the song too, and the "Memorable line" was Cube's reaction to those who criticized lyrics from his previous album *Death Certificate* in '91 (especially the song "Black Korea", which mentioned burning down stores if Blacks weren't shown respect by Asian store owners). The aggressive lyrics here are supported by an extra funky bass line looped from a 1973 jazz song called "Get Down" by Gene Russell. One of the best, yet lesser known cuts Ice Cube ever made.

#314 Dreamin' Loleatta Holloway

400 to 301 217

Writers: Allan Felder, Norman Harris, Ron Tyson
Producer: Norman Harris
Year: 1976-77/Album: *Loleatta*Label: Gold Mind/Salsoul
Memorable line:
"Oww! Woo!"



Autographed copy of the Loleatta album

Nearly a decade after its original release in the disco era, "Dreamin" became one of my favorite songs of Chicago's House music scene. Like several other House cuts in The MC 500, I heard DJ Lee Collins play it on his Saturday

night "Disco Madness" show on WHPK in December 1985 and January 1986. The energy of this song is ridiculous, and Collins heightened it by making the "oww! woo!" part repeat over and over again several times. My mother once called this "a silly song", but I call "Dreamin" one of my 500 All-Stars. In 2007 I was fortunate enough to get the *Loleatta* album signed by the great Loleatta herself after a three song performance at Chicago's Negro League Cafe. Miss Holloway died of heart failure in 2011, yet "Dreamin" is one of the songs that cemented her place as one of the outstanding vocalists of all-time. Check out the extended versions of her dance classics "Hit and Run", "Love Sensation", and "Catch Me on the Rebound" for further proof.

#313 Coco Joe Thomas

Writer: Bob Babbitt
Producer: Sonny Lester
Year: 1976/Album: Feelin's From Within
Label: Groove Merchant

The late great bass player Bob Babbitt wrote this funky little coolout tune that has everything I love about 1970s jazz. The bass line bounces, the flute played by artist Joe Thomas gives it an airy quality, and the drums keep the beat nice & steady. "Coco" is the first of two songs from Thomas' outstanding all-instrumental *Feelin's From Within* album to make my 500; an album my parents actually had in their collection. I remember seeing it in our basement as a kid, but I don't recall hearing it. I checked it out around 1993 and I was immediately glad I did. Sean "P. Diddy" Combs' Bad Boy producers checked it out too, since it was sampled in the original version of his song "I Need a Girl" in 2001.

#312 Unchained Van Halen

Writers: Edward Van Halen, David Lee Roth,
Alex Van Halen, Michael Anthony
Producer: Ted Templeman
Year: 1981/Album: Fair Warning
Label: Warner Bros.
Memorable line:
"I don't ask for permission!
This is my chance to fly!"

The first appearance on the 500 from my favorite rock band, "Unchained" is one of Van Halen's greatest anthems. It has all the elements that made them a great band: a rock solid bass line and good background vocals from Michael Anthony; drums from Alex Van Halen that push the energy of the song; blistering lead guitar from Eddie; and David Lee Roth's attitude, humor & vocal approach. Their producer Ted Templeman is even heard in the "gimme a break" breakdown. One of my favorite songs to drive to, I always change the line "Blue eyed murder in a size 5 dress" to "Brown eyed murder in a size 5 dress" since brown is my favorite color eyes on a woman.

#311

Renaissance Lonnie Liston Smith & the Cosmic Echoes

Writers: Jeff Gaines, Lonnie Liston Smith
Producers: Bob Theile, Lonnie Liston Smith
Year: 1976-77/Album: *Renaissance*Label: RCA
Memorable line:
"And you wonder why the world
hasn't shared this feeling too.

Now you see, now you know, and wonder why you are one of so few."

Out of all the great jazz artists of the 1970s, keyboard player Lonnie Liston Smith (not to be confused with jazz artist Dr. Lonnie Smith) is my favorite; hands down. His first two albums, *Astral Traveling* and *Cosmic Funk* are somewhat forgettable. But beginning with 1975's *Expansions* through 1979's *Exotic Mysteries*, Smith released a series of excellent albums that captured the best of the '70s jazz vibe. Recording with his group the Cosmic Echoes (featuring his brother Donald on vocals), "Renaissance" is the title track to the fourth album of the bunch. The bass from Al Anderson, drumming by Wilby Fletcher, congas from Lawrence Killian, and swirling strings arranged by Horace Ott, all play major roles along with Smith's keyboard work, while the lyrics fit the transcendental message found in much of his music. The first of four cuts from this man and his band to make my 500. So be it!

#310 Same Damn Time Future

Writers: Sonny Uwaezuoke, Nayvadius Wilburn
Producer: Sonny Digital
Year: 2012/Album: *Pluto*Label: Freebandz/A1/Epic
Memorable line:
"Spike Lee need to get this sh*t on fiiiiilm!"

From the moment I first heard it in Atlanta, this was my ISH!!! Although it's an obvious club banger, I actually heard "Same Damn Time" on the radio before I heard it at parties because I was taking a break from clubs for awhile. The track is on point, the hook is strong, and it's full of memorable lyrics. Most of all, any song that you can make up your own lyrics to while keeping the hook is ALWAYS a winner. In my case, when I woke up to see that the digital versions of the first two books in my *Sex Time And Radio* series occupied the top two spots on one of Amazon's Kindle charts, I was able to say "Number 1, number 2, at the same damn time!" Still gets me "turned up" to this day whenever I hear it.

400 to 301 223

#309 Why You Wanna T.I.

Writers: Clifford Harris, Kevin Cates,
Neal Conway, Crystal Waters, Tei Towa,
Bebel Gilberto, Kamaal Fareed,
Ali Muhammad, Malik Taylor, James Yancey
Producer: Kevin "Khao" Cates
Year: 2006/Album: King
Label: Grand Hustle/Atlantic
Memorable line:
"Is you happy?"

T.I. is one of the best, and one of the most unintentionally funny rappers of all-time to me. Just the way he says the "Memorable line", as well as the memorable hook line of "go and tell a ni**a 'no' wit' a ass so fat" are just hilarious to me; especially since I've thought the same thing myself on more than a few occasions. The slowed down sample of Crystal Waters' "Gypsy Woman" was totally unexpected, and made "Why You Wanna" even more fun to me. I actually sang the hook to this out loud for a minute while she performed her classic at the Chosen Few House picnic in Chicago in 2013. "Gypsy Woman" is still Waters' signature song, but "Why You Wanna" will always be my jam. T.I. makes another appearance a little later in the 500 with a song I enjoy even more.

#308 Searching Change featuring Luther Vandross

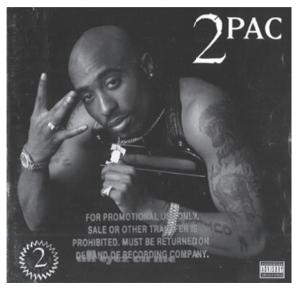
Writers: Mauro Malavasi, Paul Slade
Producer: Jacques Fred Petrus
Year: 1980/Album: *The Glow of Love*Label: RFC/Warner Bros.
Memorable line:
"What was I doin' there
far away from nowhere on my own?"
and
"Was she there in a crowd?
Was the music too loud? Was I dreamin'?"

I've always liked this one, and I've had the same sort of "lost & looking for something" feeling that's described in the lyrics while being out at various clubs around the country at different points in my life. One night in Los Angeles back in 2004 especially comes to mind whenever I hear this, as do a few more nights in downtown Chicago that same year. "Searching" was one of the two hits for the studio group Change that truly introduced the great Luther Vandross to the public in a major way. The way his vocals fade out, and then come back in later, helps add a touch of mystery to the song that goes along perfectly with the synthesizer bass line and the title. "Searching" is my favorite song that Vandross sang, and it gets a well deserved spot on The MC 500.

NOTE: Songwriter Mauro Malavasi was credited as Mario Malavasi on the original album.

#307 Skandalouz 2Pac featuring Nate Dogg

Writers: Tupac Shakur, Delmar Arnaud
Producer: Daz
Year: 1996/Album: All Eyez on Me
Label: Death Row
Memorable line:
"Before I let her get me I got her,
went in her purse and took 100 dollars.
Ni**a I'm so scandalous."



2Pac All Eyez On Me CD with promotional stamp

Even though I chose a memorable line from this song, it doesn't make my All-Star Team for the lyrics. Daz gave Pac just the type of track Death Row Records had become famous for, and like many of the great funk songs of the '70s & early '80s, it's all about the bass line here. Nate Dogg on the vocal hook, and little touches of percussion sprinkled throughout, add just the right flavor to this funky Cali hip-hop stew. Pac's spoken observations about females towards the end are also memorable. "Skandalouz" is another reason why *All Eyez on Me* is still one of my favorite albums.

#306 Let's Do It Convertion

Writers: Leroy Burgess,
James Calloway, Sonny Davenport
Producer: Greg Carmichael
Year: 1980-81
Label: Sam Records
Memorable line:
"Are you for real or just a dream?"

If you take the work of the group Black Ivory, combine it with the various productions under the names Aleems, Logg, and Phreek among others, it's clear to see that vocalist, writer, and producer Leroy Burgess was one of *tha* great geniuses of dance music in the late 1970s & early '80s. This gem under the name Convertion knocked me out the first time I heard it around 1989 as part of Chicago's great House music scene (where it was usually played at a faster pitch than normal). Both Burgess and the female vocalists are excellent here; particularly on the "don't you like it" parts. They help give the song a dreamy atmosphere that fits with the "Memorable line" I chose. A classic dance tune that makes good use of the era defining electronic Linn drum, "Let's Do It" was released on 12 inch single and on a five song EP with three tracks by other artists. It exists in both a 6:42 version and a longer 8:22 version.

#305 Definition of a Thug Ni**a 2Pac

Writers: Tupac Shakur, Warren Griffin III

Producers: 2Pac, Warren G

Year: 1993

Album: Poetic Justice:

Music From the Motion Picture

Label: Epic Soundtrax

Memorable line:

"I ain't in love wit' her,

I just wanna be the one to hit her

drop her off and let the next ni**a get her."

Whenever people talk about the G-Funk era, they always mention Dr. Dre's *The Chronid* and Snoop Dogg's debut CD *Doggystyle*. But an important yet somewhat forgotten piece of the story was the summer '93 release of the *Poetic Justice* soundtrack. This was one of the three songs from it that kept fans of *The Chronid* interested while we waited for Snoop's CD to come out. Warren G produced two of those songs, and this is the first one to make my 500. The track looped the intro to "Wind Parade" from Donald Byrd's legendary jazz-funk album *Places and Spaces*. It also included dialogue from the 1973 movie *The Mack* and Richard Pryor's "Eulogy" routine from his classic comedy album *Is It Something I Said*! Lyrically, "Definition of a Thug Ni**a" is about the mind of an inner city drug dealer, but lines like the Memorable one I chose also represented the attitudes of many other young males of the time, including my own. I still enjoy rolling to this one in the ride.

#304 Dancing Into the Stars (Album Version) Logg

Writers: Leroy Burgess,
James Calloway, Sonny Davenport
Producers: Greg Carmichael, Leroy Burgess
Year: 1981/Album: Logg
Label: Salsoul
Memorable line:
"You know you want to do the dance."

Leroy Burgess strikes again! Like his previous entry two spaces earlier on my 500, this features some excellent vocal work from Burgess and his cohorts. There's a ten minute version of "Dancing Into the Stars" that's over twice as long as the one on the *Logg* album, but the mix on the shorter version is much better in my opinion, and that's the one I chose. Not surprisingly, I first heard this on a House tape of DJ Ron Hardy at the Music Box in Chicago.

#303 Top of the World Brass Construction

Writers: Mickey Grudge, Joseph Arthur Wong
Producer: Jeff Lane
Year: 1977/Album: Brass Construction III
Label: United Artists
Memorable line:
"Gotta keep this feeling night and day."

Some funk songs fit into the disco or house format, and if I was a house DJ I would speed this up a little and play it at any party I was doing. The breakdown from the 2:55 point on is especially hitting, and guaranteed this a spot on my 500. Like most Brass Construction tracks, "Top of the World" doesn't have a lot of lyrics. Unlike most Brass Construction tracks, it wasn't written by band leader Randy Muller, as saxophonist Mickey Grudge and guitarist Joseph Arthur Wong did the honors here. An overlooked "feel good" song from the funk era, and another example of why Funk bands were about more than just hit singles. The highest ranking of the three cuts from the *Brass Construction III* album on my All-Star Team.

#302 It's Goin' Down Yung Joc featuring Nitti

Writers: Jasiel Robinson, Chadron Moore
Producer: Chadron "Nitti" Moore
Year: 2006/Album: New Joc City
Label: Bad Boy South
Memorable line:
"Anywhere you meet me guaranteed to go down!"

The dominant rap song of summer 2006, and a club classic. When I got back on Chicago radio after a two and a half year absence on August 5th of that year, this was the song I couldn't wait to have on my show. It's almost impossible to think of "It's Goin' Down" without thinking of the "motorcycle" dance they did in the video. I went to a party at an art gallery on 35th and King Drive around that time and saw a big girl do the dance so hard I thought she would knock one of the paintings off the wall! The next day I witnessed the song's popularity with kids when several of my young relatives did the dance at a post-family reunion picnic. A fun song I never really got tired of, Yung Joc's follow-up hit "I Know You See It" almost made my 500 too. I interviewed the Atlanta rapper twice in 2007; once over the phone, and once in person at the annual (and last) WGCI Music Seminar.

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1994 radio show flyer

#301 Footsteps in the Dark The Isley Brothers

Writers: Ernie Isley, Chris Jasper, Marvin Isley,
Ronald Isley, O'Kelly Isley, Rudolph Isley
Producers: The Isley Brothers
Year: 1977/Album: *Go For Your Guns*Label: T-Neck
Memorable line:
"Oh should I keep this same direction
or go back instead?"

Easily one of the most popular songs on my whole All-Star Team, "Footsteps in the Dark" has been played so much over the years that I had to remind myself of how much I liked it when I had the record as a kid. Back then I thought it was kind of scary; mostly because of the background vocals on the chorus and the title. But what gets it on my 500 is the intro. Ernie Isley is known for being a great guitarist. Many don't realize he was also the drummer on those records, and that rock steady beat he laid down for this is one of the best I've ever heard. Props also go to Chris Jasper for his excellent synthesizer work on here. One of this band's greatest creations, and a good reason why the Isley Brothers were one of the biggest band's of the 1970s funk era.

NOTE: there's also a nice instrumental remake of this song released in late 1977 by The Players' Association simply entitled "Footsteps".

300 to 250

#300 Stand! Sly & the Family Stone

Writer: Sylvester Stewart
Producer: Sly Stone
Year: 1969/Album: Stand!
Label: Epic
Memorable line:
"There's a midget standing tall,
and a giant beside him about to fall."

Over the years a few people have called me arrogant; those people have probably never heard this song. I do exactly what Sly says in the lyrics, and I make no apologies for doing so. In fact, I wouldn't have made a name for myself if I didn't stand when I had to (read the "Black Coffee" chapter of Sex Time And Radio Vol.3: "The Cult of Personality" for that powerful story). But aside from the message, what gets this on my 500 is the extra funky breakdown at the end of the song. When I worked on WGCI's "Old School Sunday" show with Ramonski Luv and the late Tornado, we used to do something called "The Stand". We would stand up in the studio while playing that ending part by itself a few times, and tell the listeners to stand too. Easily one of Sly's greatest anthems, "Stand!" is an example of why this band meant so much to so many people at that time.

#299 Spell Blue Magic

Writer: Ted Mills
Producer: Norman Harris
Year: 1973/Album: *Blue Magic*Label: Atco/Atlantic
Memorable line:
"I'm under your power baby!"

The 1974 debut album from the group Blue Magic is an all-time classic, and one of the best examples of Philly Soul recorded in the '70s. It has no less than five legitimate hits, and the remaining four songs were equally good. "Spell" was the group's first single, and it's the first of two songs from that album to make my 500. Led by vocalist and writer Ted Mills, the singing on this slow jam is flat out awesome. I played this several times on the "R&B Classics" show I hosted in my last semester of college back in the spring of 1995, and it always sounded great. While it's not as well known as their million selling #1 hit "Sideshow", "Spell" is an underrated easy going masterpiece.

#298 Kid Charlemagne Steely Dan

Writers: Walter Becker, Donald Fagen
Producer: Gary Katz
Year: 1976/Album: *The Royal Scam*Label: ABC
Memorable line:
"Son you were mistaken. You are obsolete."

This is the opening track on Steely Dan's awesome funky jazz-rock album *The* Royal Scam (my #7 favorite album of all-time), and the first of three cuts from it to make my 500. The rhythm section of studio musicians Bernard Purdy on drums, Chuck Rainey on bass, and Larry Carlton on guitar were on fire here. But as much as I love "Kid Charlemagne", it's also sort of bittersweet to me. The lyrics are partially based on a famous acid dealer from the 1960s who suddenly found himself obsolete when the drug he was known for selling had become out of fashion in the '70s. In one line, singer Donald Fagen asks "could you feel your whole world fall apart and fade away?" Between 2004 and 2006, with my radio and club hosting careers seemingly over, I often felt like a mid-2000s version of "Kid Charlemagne", wondering what I was going to do since what I did best seemed to no longer be of value in the city I came from. The radio part of it came back just long enough to rectify that to some degree; the club hosting (which was the most fun part of it) never did. But as the song says, I "got along", and this Steely Dan gem gets a spot on my musical All-Star Team.

#297 Everlasting Love Rufus featuring Chaka Khan

Writers: Kevin Murphy,
David "Hawk" Wolinski, Dennis Belfield
Producers: Rufus
Year: 1977/Album: Ask Rufus
Label: ABC
Memorable line:
"Splendid invasion.
Late night persuasion."



Ask Rufus album signed by Chaka Khan

Chaka Khan is no doubt a legend, and her vocals on this are a great example of why. But this song is also a great example of why Rufus and Chaka together were one of the best bands of all-time. The guitar riff laid down by Tony Maiden is the

driving force of the track, while the keyboards from Kevin Murphy and Hawk Wolinski give it the lush late night feel that fit the lyrics perfectly. "Everlasting Love" was also the last single Rufus released with original drummer Andre Fischer. If you compare the drumming on the album this came from (*Ask Rufus*) to the drums of Fischer's replacement Moon Calhoun on their next album (*Street Player*) you see just how much of an impact Fischer had on the band's sound. Rufus and Chaka both continued to have hits after Andre Fischer's departure from the band, but they were never quite as funky without him.

#296 Xxplosive Dr. Dre featuring Kurupt, Nate Dogg & Six Two

Writers: Andre Young, Brian Bailey,
Ricardo Brown, Craig Longmiles,
Nathaniel Hale, Chris Taylor
Producers: Dr. Dre, Mel-Man
Year: 1999-2000
Album: Dr. Dre 2001
Label: Aftermath/Interscope
Memorable line:
"Here baby hit the bong,
while the west coast rolls along."

After dominating the game for nearly a decade, west coast hip-hop got pretty silent with the death of Tupac and the fall of Death Row Records. Then after about a three year absence, the west came back hard with *Dr. Dre 2001* aka "Chronic 2001". While "Still DRE", "Forgot About Dre" and "Next Episode"

were promoted, the real gems from that CD weren't the singles, and this was probably the best of them all. As he'd done several times before, Dre turned to the Isaac Hayes catalog. He had musicians Colin Wolfe, Sean Cruse, Camara Kambon, and Taku Hirano replay a tune called "Bumpy's Lament" from Hayes' *Shaft* soundtrack to make this beat. The late Nate Dogg turned in a great performance, and the unknown Texas rapper Six Two gave one of the most memorable verses on the whole CD. A hip-hop classic, "Xxplosive" still rocks parties to this day.

#295 Freakin' Time Pt. 2 Asphalt Jungle

Writers: Keith Benson, James Hicks
Producer: Keith Benson
Year: 1979-80
Label: TEC
Memorable line:
"Can't you feel it baby?
Can't you feel it y'all?"

A smokin' combination of disco and funk, "Freakin' Time" was a one time project for Keith Benson; a drummer from Philly who played on sessions for artists like Teddy Pendergrass, First Choice, Loleatta Holloway, and Jean Carn (including song #385 on my 500, "Was That All It Was"). I first heard this in 1991 on a tape I got from Chicago DJ V Dub. It was the last song in a mix done around 1986 by legendary House DJ Ron Hardy. Aside from the track's overall energy, what really got me were the keyboard solo and the vocals. Since "Freakin' Time" was only issued on a 12 inch single, and there was never an entire Asphalt Jungle album, there aren't any musician credits

available to find out who played or sang on it besides Keith Benson. Whoever played the keyboards did an excellent job of creating a freaky space vibe that probably sounded incredible at clubs. The horns, guitar, and congas also add to the vibe, while both the male and female lead & background singers fit the whole atmosphere perfectly. I do know that the great solo and vocal ad-libs are only heard on the Pt. 2 side of the single (which lasts 6:16), while Pt. 1 is a 4:24 version that seemed to be condensed for possible radio play. There are a few clips on YouTube of a version that combined Parts 1 & 2 together, but that one is even harder to find than the already rare separated parts single.

NOTE: a 1981 cut called "Can You Feel It" by the Funk Fusion Band is a re-edited version of "Freakin' Time" with a saxophone replacing many of the vocals.

#294 Spring Again Lou Rawls

Writers: Kenneth Gamble, Leon Huff
Producers: Kenneth Gamble, Leon Huff
Year: 1977/Album: *Unmistakably Lou*Label: Philadelphia International
Memorable line:
"Pretty colors are everywhere.
Mother nature she still cares."

The virtual disappearance of my father's side of the family in the '80s is one of the great mysteries of my life. But before his death in '79 things were quite the opposite, and if there's one song, and record label, that reminds me of being around the Chapman family it's this one. Lou Rawls was just one of the

stars on the Philadelphia International label in the '70s; along with acts like Teddy Pendergrass, MFSB, and my dad's favorite, The O'Jays. "Spring Again" is from the second album Lou made with the Philly crew; a year after the first one gave him his signature song (the classic "You'll Never Find Another Love Like Mine").

"Spring Again" was the B-side to the hit single "See You When I Git There", and the song that followed it on the album. The lyrics are very optimistic, and are a reminder of the simple things in life that we should all take the time to appreciate. I call this "a comfort song". The steady beat provided by Charles Collins on drums, Larry Washington on congas, and Michael "Sugar Bear" Foreman on bass, rocks back & forth like a baby carriage. At the same time, the super cool voice of Lou Rawls provides a fatherly-like presence; especially when he sings the reassuring lyric "she still cares". The background vocals of Barbara Ingram, Carla Benson, and Evette Benton add the maternal element that confirms the comfort level even more. The whole song has a certain quality to it that reminds me of the simple & happy time of being a little kid watching my family play cards while they listened to music like this. The '70s is the only decade where my whole family was a part of my life, and this song represents the feeling of living in that time for me.

NOTE: Lou Rawls won a Grammy Award for the *Unmistakably Lou* album in the Best R&B Vocal Performance, Male category in 1978, and it was the second time Lou beat out Marvin Gaye for a Grammy. In the David Ritz biography *Divided Soul: The Life of Marvin Gaye* (which I consider to be the best music biography I've ever read), Gaye stated that Rawls' victory at the awards show pissed him off so much that the Motown legend wanted to "punch him out on national television. God intervened on Rawls' behalf and kept me in my seat"!

#293 For Real Roy Ayers/Wayne Henderson

Writer: Richard Flowers
Producers: Roy Ayers, Wayne Henderson
Year: 1978/Album: *Step In To Our Life*Label: Polydor

A remake of a rare 1976 single by a group called Flowers, this was easily the best song to come out of the two album collaboration between jazz heavy-weights Roy Ayers and Wayne Henderson. I first heard "For Real" while I was working at Dr. Wax Records in 1998 or '99, but like "Get On Up, Get On Down" at #352, I didn't really pay attention to this until I got the 2 disc Ayers anthology *Evolution* in 2001. The bass guitar playing from Ed Reddick is both phenomenal, and a good example of the "slapping with the thumb" technique used by funk bassists in the '70s. The vocals from singers Gregg Matta and Reggie Ellis are also on point, and they fit the vibe of the song perfectly. As good as "For Real" is, it sounds even better slowed down some, which is how I always play it at home. A great late night cool out song that starts off the "Mellow Vibes" portion of a Roy Ayers compilation I made in 2013.

#292 Panama Van Halen

Writers: Edward Van Halen, David Lee Roth,
Alex Van Halen, Michael Anthony
Producer: Ted Templeman
Year: 1984/Album: 1984
Label: Warner Bros.
Memorable line:
"I reach down...between my legs, and...
ease the seat back."

Lead singer and lyricist David Lee Roth once described this song as being one where you "just don't know" exactly what it's about. "Is it a girl? Is it a car? Is it a girl in a car?" or maybe it's all of that rolled into one. "Panama" is definitely a great song to drive to, and Roth's use of automotive sexual metaphors also makes it clever and fun. The wild video takes the fun to an even higher level. A rock classic, "Panama" is the first of four cuts from this band's biggest album to make The MC 500.

#291 Catfish The Four Tops

Writers: Lawrence Payton,
Fred Bridges, Mikki Farrow
Producer: Lawrence Payton
Year: 1976/Album: Catfish
Label: ABC Records
Memorable line:
"Catfish...makes my nature rise!"

The Four Tops made their name as one of the main acts on Berry Gordy's Motown label; particularly the material they recorded with the writing & producing team of Holland/Dozier/Holland from 1964 to 1967. Yet as much as I respect classics like "Reach Out, I'll Be There" and "I Can't Help Myself (Sugar Pie, Honey Bunch)", it's the material they recorded on the ABC label in the '70s that I like the most, and that era of their career produced the Tops' entry on The MC 500. I vaguely remember "Catfish" from when it was out; probably because we had the 45 at home. But it fully came to my attention when Chicago House music DJ Lee Collins played it a few times on WHPK during his Saturday night "Disco Madness" show in the spring of 1986. A dance tune that sounds even better when the pitch control is slowed down some, the playful double entendre gives the song a sexual edge to it that's not normally associated with this group, and what's more fun than the unexpected? "Catfish" turned out to be the Tops' last hit until they came back five years later in '81 with the #1 smash "When She Was My Girl"; a song that had its own memorable line: "the big legged girl is gone!"

#290 Get the Funk Out Ma Face (Disco version) The Brothers Johnson

Writers: Quincy Jones,
George Johnson, Louis Johnson
Producer: Quincy Jones
Year: 1976
Label: A&M
Memorable line:
"Then tell us our funk did you some good!"



Rare promotional 12 inch vinyl copy of "Get the Funk Out Ma Face"

Before he linked up with Michael Jackson, Quincy Jones' only production credits outside of jazz came with the funky duo known as the Brothers

Johnson. Their 1976 debut album *Look Out For #1* is a classic. I saw it at my cousin Donald's house when I was a kid, and I added it to my collection around 1988, but it was 1999 when I got totally into the album and the group itself. The album version of "Get the Funk" is great, but it only lasts 2 and a half minutes. The version released on 12 inch single is a slightly different mix, lasts a full 6 minutes, and is an absolute Monster! After the bass & drums breakdown at the 3 minute mark, the guitar, other instruments, and vocals gradually come back in to build it up to the high point at the end. "Get The Funk Out Ma Face" is one of Quincy's best productions, and the first of 5 songs in my 500 from one of my favorite groups. This longer disco version should've also been added as a bonus track when *Look Out For #1* came out on CD, but it wasn't.

#289 One Two Three (Counting on Love) Peter Jacques Band

Writers: Mauro Malavasi, Paul Slade
Producer: Jacques Fred Petrus
Year: 1980/Album: *Welcome Back*Label: Goody Music
Memorable line:
"Oh, oh, let's GO!"

One day in 2001 while I was on my way to work at K104 in Dallas, I was listening to a tape of Chicago house cuts I'd made back in 1992. This song by the Peter Jacques Band was the last track I heard before getting out of the car. "One, Two, Three (Counting on Love)" features clearly audible background vocals by Luther Vandross, who was still an unknown studio singer when it

came out in 1980. When I got to the station that day in 2001, guess who was in the studio...Luther Vandross himself! I told him that I'd just been listening to this track in the car right before I came in. Vandross didn't quite remember the song, but he knew it was the same producers he worked with on the 1980 hits from Change that set him up for solo stardom: "The Glow of Love" and "Searching" (#308 on the 500). Like the latter two songs, the sound of "Counting on Love" was heavily influenced by the group Chic, but with more of a fast paced Italian disco edge. So fast in fact that it still sounds fast if you slow the pitch control down all the way. Sadly, producer Jacques Fred Petrus was murdered in 1987 at age 39 under mysterious circumstances in Guadeloupe.

NOTE: This was also issued with the reverse title "Counting on Love (One Two Three)".

#288 Luxury The Rolling Stones

Writers: Mick Jagger, Keith Richards
Producers: The Glimmer Twins
(Mick Jagger, Keith Richards)
Year: 1974/Album: It's Only Rock 'n Roll
Label: Rolling Stone Records/Atlantic
Memorable line:
"Make a million for the Texans...
20 dollar me."

2000 was the year I explored the Rolling Stones' catalog to find out just why they're considered "the world's greatest rock & roll band". I found out it's a title they deserve. I also learned that their 1974 album *It's Only Rock 'n Roll*

is sort of the "love it or hate it" release among their fans. I'm in the first category, and this is the first of three songs from that album to make my 500. Their previous album *Goats Head Soup* had been recorded in Jamaica, yet "Luxury" is the song with the reggae feel to it. Mick Jagger also sings in a kind of Jamaican dialect to fit the vibe of the music. He's definitely no Bob Marley, but I like the touch, and the song overall. Props also go to drummer Charlie Watts for the solid yet tricky rhythm, Bill Wyman on bass, and to the guitar playing of Keith Richards & Mick Taylor.

#287 You're Just the Right Size (1985 House Remix) The Salsoul Orchestra

Writer: Vincent Montana, Jr.
Producer: Vincent Montana, Jr.
Remix by Erasmo Rivera, Brett Wilcots
Year: 1985
Label: Rams Horn

The original version of "You're Just the Right Size" was released in 1975 on the self-titled debut album from the Salsoul Orchestra on Salsoul Records. The Orchestra was basically made up of the same musicians who recorded as MFSB for Philadelphia International before they fell out with that label's owners; Kenny Gamble and Leon Huff. I first heard this in a House mix by DJ Farley Jackmaster Funk on Chicago station WBMX in the summer of '85. The version he and other House DJs have always played is the re-edit done by Erasmo Rivera & Brett Wilcots that was released on the Holland based reissue label Rams Horn. It starts off with the congas from another House jam, "Use

Me Lose Me" by the Paul Simpson Connection, before going into a dramatic part of "Right Size" that actually comes up later in the original 1975 version. Earl Young's drumming on this is outstanding, the Don Renaldo-led string section is flat out awesome, and the vocals of the Sigma Sweethearts (Evette Benton, Carla Benson & the late Barbara Ingram) have just the right feeling of naughtiness to fit the title.

"You're Just the Right Size" is easily one of the best songs ever written by the late Salsoul Orchestra leader Vince Montana. This has always been a favorite of mine, but it's also been a theme song since 1995 when my girlfriend at the time discovered an important piece of info that's affected my interactions with women ever since then. The story behind that can be found in a chapter called "Measuring Up" in the first book of my *Sex Time And Radio* series.

#286 Where My Homiez (Come Around My Way) Ill Al Skratch

Writers: Lorenzo Grooms, Alphonso Constant,
Patrick Harvey, Tony Prendatt
Producers: The LG Experience, LoRider
Year: 1994/Album: *Creep Wit' Me*Label: Mercury
Memorable line:
"Whoever smoke weed need to stay for awhile."

One of the great two hit wonder acts in hip-hop history, Ill Al Scratch helped define the summer of 1994 with this joint. They weren't the first to sample

Barry White's classic "Playing Your Game Baby", but they used it better than anybody else before or since. Props go to Caryn Lee, a fellow intern for WGCI in Chicago in summer '94, for fighting to get this song added to the station's music rotation. Most hip-hop songs only played during the 6 to 10 night shows on Mainstream Urban stations back then, and this was definitely considered "hard rap" at the time. "Where My Homiez" was a staple of any uptempo compilation tape I made for myself in the '90s, and it's still one of my favorite cuts to play in the car to this day.

#285 Happy Man Chic

Writers: Bernard Edwards, Nile Rodgers
Producers: Bernard Edwards, Nile Rodgers
Year: 1978-79/Album: *C'est Chic*Label: Atlantic
Memorable line:
"Hangin' out all night with the jet set, and I party every little chance I get...
I'm a happy man!"

Chic's second album *C'est Chid* is a classic that I remember being *the* record to have at the time when it was out. This side 1 closer on the vinyl release wasn't even one of its main attractions, yet it's the 2nd of the 2 Chic jams on The MC 500. Unlike most of their other great songs where female vocalists like Norma Jean Wright, Alfa Anderson, or the combination of Anderson and Luci Martin handled the lead, "Happy Man" featured the late Bernard Edwards out front on vocals in addition to his funky bass playing. Though it was released during the height of the New York/Studio 54 disco scene in late

1978-79, this song is a damn near perfect description of me 20 years later in the 1998-99 party scene of Chicago.

At age 25, after six years of struggle in radio, I'd just broken through to primetime exposure on the Saturday night 6 to 10 show with Dr. Luv on WGCI. With that came the opportunity to start hosting the biggest African-American party in the city every weekend; Teddy Gilmore's Club Net function at the River West Brewery. But there were other great parties in Chicago's elite jet set scene too. From Thursday nights at Club Elixir to the great events from promoters like Phil & Nate and New Birth, Chicago nightlife was on *fire*; even in the dead of winter. I went to as many of those events as I could, and met some of the most memorable people to ever cross my path. It's all captured in a chapter called "Welcome to the Club" in the book *Sex Time And Radio Vol. 3: "The Cult of Personality"*. I was definitely a happy man.



Top left: *C'est Chid* album. Top right: Flyer for the first River West Brewery party
Bottom: on stage at the River West on my birthday. June 5, 1999
Photo by Ronnie Wilson

#284 Into You Funkadelic

Writers: George Clinton,
William Collins, Walter Morrison
Producer: George Clinton
Year: 1978

Album: *One Nation Under a Groove*Label: Warner Bros.

Memorable line:

"Any night you'll be uptight until you find, that the wrong and the right are within your mind."

My all-time favorite band singing about being as into their fans as their fans were into them. Late bass singer Ray Davis, best known for the intro to Parliament's "Give Up the Funk (Tear the Roof Off the Sucker)", turned in a great rare performance as lead vocalist on this. Ron Ford, Junie Morrison, and the late Garry Shider also standout on lead, while Brides of Funkenstein members Lynn Mabry and Dawn Silva anchor the background vocals, along with Gary "Mudbone" Cooper and Richard "Kush" Griffith from Bootsy's Rubber Band. This is one of many examples of band leader George Clinton knowing P-Funk was a collection of many great talented people and not all about him. He contributes here as a producer instead of being the star out front. "Into You" is the first of two songs from Funkadelic's best selling album to make my 500.

#283 Don't You Wanna Party Instant Funk

Writers: Kim Miller, Scotty Miller, Raymond Earl, Bunny Sigler Producer: Bunny Sigler Year: 1979/Album: *Instant Funk* Label: Salsoul

As a little kid hearing my parents and other adults having good times in the basement, I was fascinated by the idea of people partying at night while I was asleep. Therefore, a song from that era by a funk band that asks the question "Don't You Wanna Party" didn't have a hard time grabbing my attention when I finally heard it about 25 years later. The first part of this song is good, but from about the 2:24 mark until the end is what got it on my 500. I can play that part over & over again, so I rarely listen to this cut without repeating it at least once. Drummer Scotty Miller and bassist Raymond Earl gave outstanding performances here, and the whole band sounds like they had a damn good time making this in the studio. Yes I like to party; always have, and probably always will to some degree. "Don't You Wanna Party" isn't a well known jam, yet it's a good snapshot of the late '70s party scene, and it reminds me of being a kid at that time. It's the second cool track from the Instant Funk album to make The MC 500; an album that reached #1 on the Billboard R&B album chart and delivers on the promise implied by its title, with a little disco mixed in for good measure.



Top: The *Instant Funk* album

Bottom: holding a party balloon in the basement with Aunt Rose, dad, and mom.

New Year's Eve 1978

#282 Funky Reputation Faze-O

Writers: James Williams, Clarence Satchell,
LeRoy Bonner, Marshall Jones, Ralph Middlebrooks,
Marvin Pierce, William Beck
Producers: Tight Corp.
Year: 1978/Album: *Riding High*Label: She/Atlantic
Memorable line:
"You've got to let my funk be your inspiration!"

The song that follows the classic "Riding High" on the album of the same name, this probably should've been the band's follow-up single as well. "Funky Reputation" starts with a cool drum roll from Roger "Dodger" Parker and just takes off from there. Keyboardist Keith Harrison takes the lead vocal on the verses, but it's the full band chant of "funk!" every few bars after the 2:30 mark that takes the song over the top. I could easily see that being a crowd participation favorite at funk concerts when this was out, and it may have worked on the radio too. The bass guitar playing from Tyrone "Flye" Crum and the horns from Faze-O associates Jack Kramer, Paul Serrano, and Bobby Lewis are worth noting on this as well. "Funky Reputation" is the second of three cuts from Faze-O's first album on my 500 song All-Star Team.

NOTE: Despite the writer's credit going to the Ohio Players, Keith Harrison maintains that this and all the songs on the *Riding High* album were written by the members of Faze-O.

#281 Been So Long Anita Baker

Writer: Anita Baker
Producers: Michael J. Powell,
Marti Sharron, Gary Skardina
Year: 1986/Album: *Rapture*Label: Elektra
Memorable line:
"Just because I love you,
it doesn't mean I won't disappear."
and
"A hubba hubba bubba."

By 1986, R&B songs with all live instruments and no drum machines were an endangered species. Thankfully Anita Baker didn't follow the standard of that time. The Grammy winning performances on her classic album *Rapture* made her an instant legend (ala Lauryn Hill 12 years later). That classic multiplatinum release was full of hit singles, but it was this album cut that always stood out to me. "Been So Long" was one of the very few songs at the time to prominently feature my favorite instrument, the bass guitar, like R&B did in the '70s. Props go to Jimmy Halsip for playing that bass, as well as the late Ricky Lawson for his live drumming. An awesome performance overall that earns "Been So Long" a spot on my 500 song All-Star Team.

In a side note, I made up a dirty version of this around 2005 while sitting in a traffic jam on Chicago's Dan Ryan expressway.

#280 Gotta Find a Lover Roy Ayers Ubiquity

Writers: Roy Ayers, Edwin Birdsong Producer: Roy Ayers with Edwin Birdsong and William Allen Year: 1977/Album: *Lifeline* Label: Polydor

This falls in the "so bad it didn't need real lyrics" category. "Gotta Find a Lover" is an erotic jam session with Roy doing his thing on vibes and repeating the title a few times. Sylvia Cox provides the moans & groans while the musicians provide the sexy atmosphere. Chano O'Ferral on congas, William Allen on bass, Philip Woo on keyboards, Justo Almario on saxophone, and Steve Cobb on drums, all shine here. This was the last great song Ayers did with the band Ubiquity; as his remaining releases were under his name alone. A great late night groove that sounds even greater with the pitch control slowed down, "Gotta Find a Lover" deserves more props than it gets.

#279 Tune In Pleasure

Writer: Nathaniel Phillips
Producer: Wayne Henderson
Year: 1977/Album: *Joyous*Label: Fantasy
Memorable line:
"Mental vibes come naturally...
for you...for me."

This is quite simply one of THE baddest slow jams ever made, bar none. The fact that "Tune In" wasn't a hit is certainly no fault of the band themselves. Lead singer Sherman Davis turned in another excellent performance here, while guitarist Marlon McClain, bassist/writer Nathaniel Phillips, keyboard playing brothers Donald & Michael Hepburn, and the rest of the band show off their versatility. A crime this song, album, and band weren't bigger than they were.

#278 Oh Boy Gorl Bootsy's Rubber Band

Writers: William Collins, George Clinton, Gary Cooper, Ron Dunbar Producers: William Collins, George Clinton Year: 1979

Album: This Boot Is Made For Fonk-N

Label: Warner Bros.

Memorable line:

"Oh boy girl, is all that I can come up with when we mess around."

After all the great ballads on their first three albums, this is sort of the "lost slow jam" from Bootsy's Rubber Band. "Oh Boy Gorl" may not be quite as good as its predecessors like "Munchies For Your Love" and "I'd Rather Be With You", but it still has that erotic liquid funk vibe that was the sole territory of William "Bootsy" Collins and his boys in the late '70s. Gary "Mudbone" Cooper and Robert "P-Nut" Johnson turn in good vocal performances, while Joel "Razor Sharp" Johnson stands out on keyboards. This song has a certain quality to it that I connected with from the first time I heard it around 1986 (when I decided I had to have all the albums P-Funk ever made). An underground slow funk gem, "Oh Boy Gorl" is the first of 7 Bootsy songs to make my 500.

#277 Can't Let Go Earth, Wind & Fire

Writers: Bill Meyers, Maurice White, Allee Willis
Producer: Maurice White
Year: 1979/Album: I Am
Label: American Recording Company/Columbia
Memorable line:
"Darkness shuts its eyes
baby I open mine to you."

If you watched the "Tonight Show" on NBC anytime towards the end of Jay Leno's run as the host, there's a good chance you heard the band play this at least once (I heard it on the show every few weeks). "Can't Let Go" is an energetic jam that stands up to anything else in this band's catalog. In fact, it's a testament to the greatness of Earth, Wind & Fire that a song this smokin' wasn't even a hit single. Easily my favorite cut on my favorite EW&F album, "Can't Let Go" is their second highest ranked song on The MC 500.

#276 Sweet Dynamite Claudja Barry

Writers: Jorg Evers, Jurgen Korduletsch
Producer: Jurgen Korduletsch
Year: 1977/Album: Sweet Dynamite
Label: Salsoul
Memorable line:
"Listen to the music!"

The first time I heard this song it was in a House music mix by DJ Rush in 1991. My first reaction was "what B.T. Express album is that on?!" The bass, strings, and vocalist all sounded EXACTLY like the band I love who made "Peace Pipe", "Energy to Burn" and all the jams on the classic *Do It (Til You're Satisfied)* album. But alas I was wrong. Jamaican born Claudja Barry is the singer here, and she was one of the many female vocalists to emerge in the disco era. *Sweet Dynamite* was her debut album, and this title track is an awesome production of pumping bass, piercing strings, and soaring lead & background vocals. While "Sweet Dynamite" is the jam that makes my 500, it's not the only noteworthy track on the album. At least two of its five cuts have been used in other songs. Most notably, the album opener "Love For the Sake of Love" was sampled in the last big hits for both R&B singer Montell Jordan (1999's chart topping "Get It On...Tonite"), and rapper Da Brat ("What'Chu Like" featuring Tyrese in 2000).

#275 Hotel California The Eagles

Writers: Don Felder, Don Henley, Glenn Frey
Producer: Bill Szymczyk
Year: 1976-77/Album: Hotel California
Label: Elektra/Asylum
Memorable line:
"Her mind is Tiffany twisted,
she got the Mercedes bends (uhh!).
She got a lot of pretty, pretty boys,
that she calls friends."

"Hotel California" is another one of the "heard it on the clock radio in my parents' bedroom as a kid" songs to make my 500. I liked it immediately, and the band that made it has grown in stature with me to become one of my absolute favorites. My favorite Eagle of them all was guitarist Don Felder. Not only did he write the music to this, he was also the one who looked most like an Eagle to me. Don Henley and Glen Frey wrote some of the greatest lyrics of all-time, and this is their mysterious masterpiece. In 2000 "Hotel California" was ranked #6 on VH1's list of the 100 greatest songs in rock & roll history; deservedly so.

#274 It's Going Down EPMD

Writers: Erick Sermon, Parrish Smith Producers: EPMD Year: 1992

Album: Original Motion Picture Soundtrack: Juice
Label: Sound of Urban Listeners/MCA
Memorable line:
"Act like Bo Jackson Nike and just do it!"

Because it was released on the *Juice* soundtrack about 7 months before appearing on their own album *Business Never Personal*, and it wasn't a single, this cut is sometimes forgotten when people talk about the best songs made by rap duo EPMD. "It's Going Down" was one of the last songs I ever heard for the first time on Chicago station WHPK, and I was into it immediately. The track is driven by the excellent use of Marvin Gaye's classic "I Want You" (#346 in the 500), and it ran through my mind a lot when it was finally time for my line to pledge Kappa Alpha Psi that spring '92 semester. It was definitely going down.

#273 Walk in the Night Jr. Walker & the All Stars

Writers: Johnny Bristol, Marilyn McLeod Producer: Johnny Bristol Year: 1972/Album: *Moody Jr.*

Best known for their million selling #1 classic "Shotgun", saxophonist Jr. Walker & his band of All Stars had 12 Top 10 R&B hits on Motown's "Soul" subsidiary label from 1965 through 1970. After an off year in '71, they came back the next year with what turned out to be their last major hit; this gem that makes my 500 song All-Star Team. Like most of their recordings, "Walk in the Night" is mainly an instrumental with the title repeated throughout the song. I'm pretty sure the first time I heard it was through Chicago radio DJ Herb Kent, and it's one of many songs over the years that knocked me out right away, but I couldn't figure out what they were actually saying. The singers aren't credited on the *Moody Jr.* album, so I still don't know who they were. But they did a great job of adding to the "night mood" suggested by the title. Writer and producer Johnny Bristol went on to enjoy a few big hits of his own during the '70s with "Hang On in There Baby" and "Do It to My Mind".

#272 Pretzel Logic Steely Dan

Writers: Walter Becker, Donald Fagen
Producer: Gary Katz
Year: 1974/Album: Pretzel Logic
Label: ABC
Memorable line:
"Those days are gone forever.
Over a long time ago. Oh yeah!"

The jazzy rock geniuses of Steely Dan added a little blues to the mix for this one. "Pretzel Logic" is a song about traveling to various points in time, and time travel is something a lot of us would like to do every now and then if it were possible. This is another standout from my excursion into classic rock in late 1998/early 1999. The snowy scene on the *Pretzel Logid* album cover reminds me of that winter too because I was looking for my first apartment at the time. That was a great time of my own life that I'd certainly travel back to for awhile if I could. Oh yeah!

#271 Life in the Country The Ebonys

Writers: Theodore Life, Phil Terry, Talmadge Conway
Producers: Theodore Life, Phil Terry, Talmadge Conway
Year: 1974/Album: *The Ebonys*Label: Philadelphia International
Memorable line:
"Life in the country is fine, fine!"

I can't quite recall if I first heard this via Herb Kent on Chicago's V103 or on the Al Greer programmed 106.3 FM WJPC, but I know it was in the summer of 1994 while I was interning at WGCI-AM 1390 under Sean Ross. I remember a guy who called in wanting to hear it saying "that's the stepper of the year right there!" Even outside of the Chicago steppers' scene, "Life in the Country" is just a flat out great song. The fact that it wasn't a hit in '74, but had a buzz in '94, confirms that. The guitars, strings, and bird sound effects all work well for the country vibe suggested by the title. "Life in the Country" is a nice chill out groove from one of the lesser known groups of Philly soul music. The Ebonys' hit ballads "You're the Reason Why" and "It's Forever" are worth checking out too.

NOTE: Producer Theodore Life, also known as T. Life, would discover singer Evelyn "Champagne" King a few years later.

#270 Thousand Finger Man Candido

Writer: Louis Small
Producer: Joe Cain
Year: 1979/Album: *Dancin' & Prancin'*Label: Salsoul
Memorable line:
"Can-diiiii-do."

I guess the minute and a half long synthesizer intro was supposed to create some type of mysterious space aged feel, but what comes after that is what makes "Thousand Finger Man" the second cut by Candido on my All-Star Team. A Chicago House classic, I first heard this in a Farley Jackmaster Funk mix on WBMX in 1984. "Thousand Finger Man" is another "loved it right away but had no idea what they were saying" song to make my 500. It was also the one record I bought on my only trip to the legendary Chicago record store Imports, Etc. in February 1985 with my cousins John Muhammad, Wendy Fuzzell, and George James. That copy was on the Rams Horn reissue label, but I finally got the original on Salsoul around 2010.

Candido was a jazz oriented conga player, but the real stars on this to me are fluglehorn player Kenny Warden, and vocalists Al-Yasha Anderson, Isabelle Cole, Miles McMillan, and Woody Cunningham. Their singing adds a sort of mystical vibe to the proceedings that works really well with the music. Cunningham did the vocal arrangement on "Thousand Finger Man", and he also played drums. Both he and bass player Norman Durham were members of the band Kleeer, who have a song of their own in the 500.

NOTE: Candido released another song and album in 1970 entitled "Thousand Finger Man" that was completely different from this 1979 track.

#269 Holding Back the Years The Isley Brothers featuring Ronald Isley

Writers: Mick Hucknall, Neil Moss
Producers: Angela Winbush, Ronald Isley
Year: 1996/Album: *Mission to Please*Label: T-Neck/Island
Memorable line:
"I'll keep holding on."

Even if you can't stand R. Kelly, one thing he should always get credit for is helping to bring the Isley Brothers back to contemporary music in the mid'90s. Lots of big hits were being made from samples of their catalog (like "It Was a Good Day" by Ice Cube, "Big Poppa" by Notorious B.I.G., and "Funkdafied" by Da Brat), but it was Ron & Ernie's guest appearance on the Kels hit "Down Low (Nobody Has to Know)", as well as the song he wrote and produced for them, "Let's Lay Together", that really got the ball rolling again. They both set the stage for the 1996 CD *Mission to Please*, which was the Isleys' first Platinum album in 16 years. Yet it was actually Ronald's then wife Angela Winbush who wrote and/or produced most of the best songs on *Mission*, including this production of the #1 pop hit "Holding Back the Years" by Simply Red from a decade earlier.

I had just become an actual employee at WGCI when that CD dropped after about seven months of being an independently contracted studio assistant. My first official job at the station was being the producer/engineer for the late night slow jam show "Whispers in the Dark". It's best known for being hosted by Chris Michaels, while some Chicagoans remember when Troi Tyler was the host. But the original host in '96 was Raymond Anthony, who was actually pre-recorded from Philadelphia. I was in the studio by myself,

and it was my job to do everything a host was supposed to do for the show except talk. Whenever this song came up in the show, I always tested my timing by playing the drop voiced by Mitch Faulkner that slowly said "W-G-C-I" over the intro, and it would always end just before Ron Isley said "yeah!" It only took about 5 seconds, but that 5 seconds was always exciting to me, and I never got tired of it or this song.

#268 Hollywood Rufus featuring Chaka Khan

Writers: David "Hawk" Wolinski, Andre Fischer
Producers: Rufus
Year: 1977/Album: Ask Rufus
Label: ABC
Memorable line:
"Everybody makes believe in Hollywood!"

Kevin Murphy, Andre Fischer, Tony Maiden, Bobby Watson, and Chaka Khan were already a great band, but the unheralded latter day member of Rufus was keyboard player David "Hawk" Wolinski. Not only did he bring more great musicianship, he also brought some serious writing skills. "Ain't Nobody", "Do You Love What You Feel", "Any Love", "Everlasting Love", and this collabo with Andre Fischer, were all written or co-written by Wolinski. His keyboard & synthesizer work are the driving force behind this one, while Chaka gives one of her best vocal performances ever. In fact, the only thing I don't like about "Hollywood" (and "Everlasting Love") is the fact that it starts fading out while she's absolutely *killing* it. If the 1977 classic *Ask Rufus* is this band's best album as many say it is, how good would it be without "Hollywood"? I don't even want to imagine.



Ask Rufus album signed by Chaka Khan

#267 You Owe Me Nas featuring Ginuwine

Writers: Nasir Jones, Steven Garrett, Timothy Mosley
Producer: Timbaland
Year: 2000/Album: Nastradamus
Label: Ill Will/Columbia
Memorable line:
"Shorty, say what's your price?"

When it came out in 2000, a lot of Nas purists couldn't stand this song. The *Nastradamus* era is considered the time when the great lyricist was chasing

commercial success instead of being a voice for New York. Maybe so, but I've never been a Nas purist, and this collaboration with Ginuwine & producer Timbaland was a favorite of mine from the first time I heard it. I also had a very good experience to this song in 2000 when I was doing the 6 to 10 night show on WTLC in Indianapolis. I hosted a handful of college parties for Butler University's chapter of Kappa Alpha Psi that were organized by two Nupes named Rodney Rivers and his partner Clarence. At one of their events I met a short brown skinned college girl named Courtney with a *huge* ass that I could never forget; especially since she decided to grind it on me while we danced to this. Nothing else ever happened between us, but for me, that college girl, that night, and this song are forever connected. I even told Nas himself about it when I interviewed him in 2006 and he thought it was funny, stating "those are the types of experiences those songs are made for!" Yes they are, and to this day when I hear "You Owe Me" I still wonder whatever happened to the woman who gave me that experience.

#266 You Ought To Be With Me Al Green

Writers: Al Green, Willie Mitchell, Al Jackson, Jr.
Producers: Willie Mitchell, Al Green
Year: 1972/Album: Call Me
Label: Hi
Memorable line:
"You don't have to waste my time,
if you want to be a friend of mine."

This is the third of the 3 songs from Al Green's album *Call Me* to make my 500. That album had 3 million selling singles on it, it was his 3rd straight

million selling album, and his 3rd straight #1 album on the R&B chart. It was also #1 the week I was born, so I'm not really surprised it connected with me right away when I first heard it in summer 1994. I didn't just like and play the songs; I actually used some of the titles and lyrics in my conversations with women back then, and this was the one that I used the most. That may seem silly, but it actually worked very well. If I was interested in a woman I wanted her to be with me, so to say "you ought to be with me" came pretty naturally; especially since by age 21 my confidence level was *exactly* where it needed to be. I also knew I could back up anything I said, so why waste time when you KNOW you want to be with me? It worked for Al. It worked for me.

#265 Only the Strong Survive Billy Paul

Writers: Kenneth Gamble, Leon Huff
Producers: Kenneth Gamble, Leon Huff
Year: 1977-78/Album: Only the Strong Survive
Label: Philadelphia International
Memorable line:
"Cookin' to a recipe known as the Philly sound!"

Originally a #1 R&B hit in 1969 for Jerry Butler, this Billy Paul disco remake done by producers Kenny Gamble & Leon Huff of their earlier classic wasn't a hit in '77. But that didn't stop DJs like Ron Hardy and Lee Collins from making "Only the Strong Survive" a part of Chicago's House music scene in the '80s. I first heard this on a Saturday night in January 1986 on WHPK during Collins' "Disco Madness" radio show. It would be even higher on my 500, but like a lot of great songs in disco and house, the second half of it is what really hits, and it has to be re-edited and extended to attain its full power. House

DJs didn't even play the first two and a half minutes of this song, and the remainder of it goes by pretty quickly. I took points off any song that needs to be restructured to get its real impact, and that's the only way I ever heard this played. In fact, I did a killer edit of "Only the Strong Survive" on cassette for my first college radio show in 1992.

#264 Bring 'Em Out T.I.

Writers: Clifford Harris, Kasseem Dean, Sean Carter,
Roland Chambers, Thom Bell, Kenneth Gamble
Producer: Swizz Beats
Year: 2004/Album: *Urban Legend*Label: Grand Hustle/Atlantic
Memorable line:
"Who got a flow and a live show better than mine?!"

In his VH1 "Behind the Music" episode, T.I. called this the song that turned him into "a nation wide success as opposed to just a Southern success". It's also one of my Top 10 favorite club jams from the 2000s. In fact, I liked "Bring 'Em Out" so much that I used the music as the basis for my show intro in 2006 when I returned to the Chicago airwaves on WGCI after a two and a half year absence. I even made sure the "Memorable line" was part of my intro since that was how I felt about my on-air skills compared to anybody else's. One of the best tracks producer Swizz Beats ever did, his use of Jay-Z's 2003 song "What More Can I Say" for the hook was brilliant. Since that joint from Hov sampled "Something for Nothing" by Philly International house band MFSB, its writers also shared in the writing credit for "Bring 'Em Out".

#263 Keeep Your Body Workin' (12 inch version) Kleeer

Writer: Norman Durham
Producer: Dennis King
Year: 1979/Label: Atlantic
Memorable line:
"Keep your body workin' til you get the freak!"

Another classic Chicago House jam that I first heard through Farley Jackmaster Funk on WBMX. "Keeep Your Body Workin" is one of those "gotta play the right version or it's not as good" songs. The mix down on the 12" single version is WAY better than the one on Kleeer's debut album I Love to Dance (which was the one used on the 2006 compilation The Very Best of Kleeer and played on the syndicated "Michael Baisden Show" for several years). Both versions have one thing in common though: the deep voiced guy singing along with the bass line played by writer Norman Durham on the hook. That particular production technique was also used by Larry Blackmon of Cameo in their 1979 and 1980 hits "I Just Want to Be", "Shake Your Pants", and "Your Love Takes Me Out", so I've always wondered if this club hit from Kleeer influenced him to do that since it came out first. Props also have to go to Isabelle Coles for her performance on lead vocals. "Keeep Your Body Workin" is a great party song that truly captures the vibe of the late '70s disco era. Don't sleep on their 1984 jams "Intimate Connection" and "Tonight" either. The former was used in 2Pac's "California Love (Remix)" in 1996 while the latter was the basis for DJ Quik's 1991 hit "Tonight".

NOTE: Both the band's name and the word "Keeep" in the song title are spelled with three e's instead of two. That's not a mistake.

#262 It's All the Way Live Lakeside

Writer: Fred Lewis
Producers: Dick Griffey,
Leon Sylvers, Lakeside
Year: 1978-79/Album: Shot of Love
Label: Solar
Memorable line:
"To even get a seat, you got to be here early!"

Over the years lots of songs have taken time to grow on me. Not many funk hits from the '70s fall into that category, including this one. I liked "It's All the Way Live" from the first time I heard it as a little kid, and its funky military intro is still one of my favorites. By the time the vocals kick in, you already know this is a serious party jam of the highest order, and it just gets better from there. When I started scooping up records from my family members' collections in late 1988, this jam from a decade earlier was one of the main ones I was happy to find. Lakeside were always among my favorite bands because A: they made fun party songs, B: they made good slow songs, and C: their album covers had cool thematic drawings of the band members and the theme changed with each release. Plus the long version of "It's All the Way Live" has a Latin styled percussion breakdown that makes it even more exciting. Five star funk that still makes me feel like a little kid every time I hear it, there was no way I could leave this off my 500 song All-Star Team. Marvin Craig, Fred Lewis, Fred Alexander, Tiemeyer McCain, Steven Shockley, Norman Beavers, Otis Stokes, Thomas Shelby and Mark Wood...a good band!

#261 My Rhyme Ain't Done LL Cool J

Writers: James Todd Smith, Bobby Erving,
Darryl Pierce, Dwayne Simon
Producers: LL Cool J, the L.A. Posse
Year: 1987/Album: Bigger And Deffer
Label: Def Jam/Columbia
Memorable line:
"Tight leather pants that'll make you grunt.
Two nice soft things right up front."

The second of 5 cuts from LL's classic sophomore album *Bigger And Deffer* to make my 500, to this day "My Rhyme Ain't Done" is still one of the most creative rap songs I've ever heard. It's also a good example of why Cool J had the right to call himself "the baddest rapper in the history of rap itself" back in 1987. The lyrics find him traveling through history, a deck of cards, the center of the Earth, the world of cartoons, and the "Honeymooners" TV show, where he makes reference to Eddie Murphy's classic 1983 comedy special *Delirious* with the line "Norton my pal, I said yo, don't even do it!" The song's heavy drum track and quick creative rhymes make "My Rhyme Ain't Done" one of the album's main highlights, and guaranteed it a spot on my musical All-Star Team.

#260 Keep It Live (On The K.I.L.) The Dazz Band

Writers: Reggie Andrews, Bobby Harris,
Kenny Pettus, Michael Wiley
Producer: Reggie Andrews
Year: 1982/Album: *Keep It Live*Label: Motown
Memorable line:
"What that mean?!"

This band from Cleveland, Ohio is best known for their Grammy award winning #1 hit "Let It Whip", but their follow-up to that classic is what makes my 500. I remember thinking of "Keep It Live" as a "futuristic" funk song back in '82. The keyboards and drums sound like musical laser beams, and the groove they struck is one I can listen to over & over again. While Skip Martin was the lead vocalist on most of the band's songs, and saxophonist Bobby Harris is credited with the lead here, the majority of singing on this is really more of a full band effort that gives it a live concert feel. With additional hits like "Joystick" and "Let It All Blow", The Dazz Band definitely kept it live, and I was happy to get the *Keep It Live* album signed by Skip Martin in 2007.

#259 Far Out Crown Heights Affair

Writers: Bert Reid, Raymond Reid
Producers: Freida Nerangis, Britt Britton
Year: 1976-77/Album: *Do It Your Way*Label: De-Lite
Memorable line:
"Cause no matter what you do,
you can do a little better,
if you only let your mind go...Far out!"

Crown Heights Affair is one of the great "lost bands" of the 1970s. I've lived in four different cities and four different states, but I've *neven* heard any of their songs on any "old school" radio shows or stations. In other words, you had to either know about this band when they were out, or you have to do some real research and record collecting to be up on these dudes. They had five Top 20 hits between 1975 & '79, including one Top 5, and they appeared on both Soul Train and Don Kirschner's Rock Concert. But CHA were more of a disco club band, and "Far Out" may be the best representation of what they were about. I first heard it in 1992 on a DJ Rush house tape, and I immediately got the album the next time I went record shopping in Chicago's Hyde Park neighborhood. "Far Out" is a space aged blend of disco and funk that starts strong, then kicks serious ass starting at around the 2:30 mark. Dare to let your mind go.

#258 Hot Fun in the Summertime Sly & the Family Stone

Writer: Sylvester Stewart
Producer: Sly Stone
Year: 1969/Album: *Greatest Hits*Label: Epic
Memorable line:
"First of the fall and then she goes back."

According to several sources I've read about Sly & the Family Stone, this song almost didn't come out at all. Fortunately it was rush-released in August of 1969, just before that summer was ending, and quickly shot to #3 and #2 on the Billboard R&B and Pop charts respectively. About another 20 years passed before I first heard "Hot Fun in the Summertime", but I added it to my collection as soon as I found out the title and artist. George Clinton of Parliament-Funkadelic once called Sly & the Family Stone "the greatest funk band that ever was", and band leader Sly Stone is still considered one of *the* great songwriters of all-time. The lyrical and musical brilliance of this summertime anthem proves both compliments are well deserved.

#257 What's a Telephone Bill? Bootsy's Rubber Band

Writers: William Collins, George Clinton, Gary Cooper
Producers: George Clinton, William Collins
Year: 1977/Album: Ahh...the Name is Bootsy, Baby!

Label: Warner Bros.

Memorable line:

"Excuse me if I seem obscene to you.
I'm bein' real and that seems the thang to do."



Ahh...the Name is Bootsy, Baby! signed by producer George Clinton, and band members Robert "P-Nut" Johnson, Frankie "Kash" Waddy & Joel "Razor Sharp" Johnson

I use, respect & appreciate today's technology, but I'm soooo glad I came up during the era when you had to actually talk to people on the phone. While text messaging is great, it's no substitute for real communication through the human voice; especially if you have a great voice *and* great communication skills. This song is actually about talking on the phone so much that your bill ends up being high, but if you're really into the person you're talking to you tend not to care. I can relate, so "What's a Telephone Bill?" is sort of an

anthem for me. Thankfully I have a reasonably priced "unlimited minutes" package on my phone. Unfortunately finding women to actually use it with when I want to talk has been a challenge over the past few years due to the popularity of text messaging. This is another great slow jam from William "Bootsy" Collins & his Rubber Band, and it's definitely one of the coolest songs ever made. "Telephone Bill" is the first of four cuts on the 500 from the classic album *Ahh...the Name is Bootsy, Baby!*

#256 I'm Ready Kano

Writers: Stefano Pulga, Luciano Ninzatti, Matteo Bonsanto Producer: Luigi Figini Year: 1980-81/Album: *Kano* Label: Emergency

Long before it was used in the 1993 hit "Whoomp! There It Is" by Tag Team, this jam from Italian dance band Kano was one of my childhood favorites. I had no idea who they were or what they were saying at the time, but "I'm Ready" reminds me of playing baseball at the South East Little League, where it seemed like every kid in my neighborhood was on a team. In 1989 my brother-in-law Ralph gave me all the records he had from his late '70s-early '80s DJ days, and this was one of the songs I was excited to own. A fun snapshot from my childhood that I was happy to play on my college radio show in '93 while "Whoomp! There It Is" was out.

NOTE: Kano drummer Tulio De Piscopo's solo recording "Stop Bajon" is a Chicago House music classic.

#255 Hangin' On a String Loose Ends

Writers: Carl McIntosh, Jane Eugene, Steve Nichol
Producer: Nick Martinelli
Year: 1985/Album: A Little Spice
Label: MCA
Memorable line:
"I'm not your play thing!"

From the mid to late-1980s, Black artists coming from Great Britain had a lot of impact in the United States. In fact, their music was often more soulful than the drum machine and keyboard dominated corporate sounding material made by Black artists here in America. Like Sade before them and Soul II Soul yet to come, Loose Ends were one of those acts who sounded like a breath of fresh air at the time. They used the then current technology, yet their music still sounded human instead of mechanical. "Hangin' On a String" is a perfect example of that; even the repeated "you got, you got" segment sounds cool instead of annoying. Visually they were interesting too. It wasn't (and still isn't) often you could find a thick shapely dark skinned sista as a lead vocalist in the crossover conscious music biz of the '80s, but Jane Eugene was just that. "Hangin' On a String" was Loose Ends' debut in America, and the first of their two #1 hits (the other one being "Slow Down" from 1986). A classic that I've never gotten tired of.

#254 Round of Applause Waka Flocka Flame featuring Drake

Writers: Juaquin Malphurs, Aubrey Graham, Lexus Lewis
Producer: Lex Luger
Year: 2011-12
Album: Triple F Life: Friends, Fans & Family
Label: 1017 Brick Squad/Warner Bros.
Memorable line:
"Shawty mean."

"Throwin' every President except for Nixon on yo ass."

I've always loved it when people play off words. Nearly a decade after Busta Rhymes and Sean Paul said to "Make it Clap", Atlanta rapper Waka Flocka Flame took "clapping" to the next level by requesting a "round of applause". I still laugh whenever I think about it. The song itself is my favorite club joint of the 2010 decade, and I don't even mean strip clubs, which have never really appealed to me. However, as detrimental to the genre as it may be, the fact is that strip clubs have probably been the biggest influence on hip-hop since about 2004, and "Round of Applause" is a product of the association between those two industries. The second "Memorable line" I chose came from Drake and it's also pretty clever (although rappers have conveniently ignored the fact that \$10 bill gracing Alexander Hamilton and \$100 bill face Benjamin Franklin were noth Presidents). The official video that featured Draya from the "Basketball Wives LA" TV show was fine, but I recommend checking out the YouTube clip of the Twerk Team dancing to this track since they're mentioned in the song, and since what they do provided the title. Round of Applause indeed.

#253 Let Me Put My Love Into You AC/DC

Writers: Angus Young, Malcolm Young, Brian Johnson
Producer: Robert "Mutt" Lange
Year: 1980/Album: Back in Black
Label: Atlantic
Memorable line:
"Don't you worry 'cause it's your turn tonight!
Yeah!"

An underrated libido driven hard rock anthem, the album it came from, *Back in Black*, has sold almost 20 million copies in the US alone. Because it isn't one of the big hits from that masterpiece, this album track is often overlooked, but not by me. "Let Me Put My Love Into You" is a slow paced jam with great drumming and a loud guitar crunch to it. It was also controversial. In 1985 the PMRC (Parents Music Resource Center) included "Let Me Put My Love Into You" in its list of 15 songs they felt were extremely offensive due to sexual, violent, or occult content. Judas Priest, Motley Crue, Prince, and AC/DC are the four acts who are represented on both the "Filthy 15" and "The MC 500", but this is the only song on both lists.

#252 The Pinocchio Theory Bootsy's Rubber Band

Writers: William Collins, George Clinton
Producers: George Clinton, William Collins
Year: 1977/Album: Ahh...the Name is Bootsy, Baby!

Label: Warner Bros.

Memorable line:

"These good old daaaaaaays.

These days!"

In the world of P-Funk, Bootsy's Rubber Band was supposed to be aimed more at the kids. Thus the journey from being one of Mickey Mouse's "Mouseketeers" to being one of Bootsy's "Funkateers" wasn't too hard to make, and this is the song that literally spells it out. "The Pinocchio Theory" is also important for providing the basis for the character "Sir Nose D-Void of Funk", who was the anti-funk arch enemy on the last four Parliament albums (the guy who played that character in P-Funk concerts back then, Larry Heckstall, actually went to school in Virginia with my aunts Betty and Willa). Aside from all those fun facts, what makes this song so great is the awesome performance from the band. The Horny Horns, aka Fred Wesley, Maceo Parker, Rick Gardner, and the late Richard "Kush" Griffith, are in fine form. Bernie Worrell joins in with Joel "Razor Sharp" Johnson for some killer keyboard work (particularly in the middle section of the song), while Robert "P-Nut" Johnson and Gary "Mudbone" Cooper lead the whole funky sing-a-long. I heard "The Pinocchio Theory" one day in 2013 at Pappadeaux restaurant and it sounded amazing. Seafood funk at its finest.



Ahh...the Name is Bootsy, Baby! signed by producer George Clinton, and band members Robert "P-Nut" Johnson, Frankie "Kash" Waddy & Joel "Razor Sharp" Johnson

#251 Sinner's Swing! Van Halen

Writers: Edward Van Halen, David Lee Roth,
Alex Van Halen, Michael Anthony
Producer: Ted Templeman
Year: 1981/Album: Fair Warning
Label: Warner Bros.
Memorable line:
"She looks so f***ing good,
so sexy and so frail!"

I always find it funny when people say that I'm "mellow" or think I listen to a lot of "laid back smooth R&B". Sure I chill sometimes, but I'm not a "mellow smooth" dude by nature. I simply know how to calm down and preserve

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my energy for when I actually need it, as opposed to being wired all the time and burning out too quickly. The music that moves me the most is usually energetic, and this cut here is ALL about energy. Eddie Van Halen's guitar, Alex Van Halen's drums, Michael Anthony's bass & background vocals, and David Lee Roth's ringmaster lead vocals, all add up to a kick-ass 3 minute experience. "Sinner's Swing!" is one of my favorite songs to drive to, and a song that definitely fits my energy and drive. The second of the four cuts from Van Halen's awesome 1981 album *Fair Warning* to make my 500.

#250 Indo Smoke Mista Grimm with Warren G & Nate Dogg

Writers: Rojai Trawick, Warren Griffin III Producer: Warren G Year: 1993

Album: Poetic Justice: Music From the Motion Picture

Label: Epic Soundtrax

Memorable line:

"Are...you...high...yet?!"

After Dr. Dre dropped *The Chronic*, an entire generation was feenin' for more of the G-Funk sound in 1993, and we knew it was coming on Snoop Doggy Dogg's first CD. But like patrons waiting for a main meal at a restaurant, we were treated to three appetizers on the *Poetic Justice* soundtrack that summer, and "Indo Smoke" was the biggest of the three. Replaying the music from the 1980 x-rated comedy song "Blowfly's Rapp", Warren G put himself on the map as a producer with this G-Funk masterpiece about smoking weed. Nate

Dogg's vocal performance was just as memorable, and this was an immediate favorite of mine in '93.

Ironically the person who benefited the least from this was Mista Grimm; even though he was listed as the song's artist. Since Nate Dogg & Warren G had both appeared on "Deeez Nuuuts", one of the highlights of *The Chronic*, everyone saw "Indo Smoke" as their song, not Mista Grimm's. Grimm and Warren G parted ways after "Indo Smoke", and other than appearing on the soundtrack to John Singleton's next film *Higher Learning* in 1995, Grimm basically vanished into obscurity while Warren G and Nate Dogg continued to ride the wave of West coast popularity.

Looking for the remaining songs on this All-Star Team? You'll find them in

The Coolest Music Book Ever Made aka The MC 500 Vol. 2

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About the author

MARCUS CHAPMAN

is a music historian, collector, author, and professional on-air personality known to radio listeners as MC Marcus Chapman. He was born and raised on Chicago's south east side, and was collecting music by the age of four. At age 17 he began researching music charts from Jeth and Billboard magazines while attending Northern Illinois University. The following year he began his radio career at college station WKDI. Upon graduating with a Bachelors of Arts Degree and a minor in Black Studies, Chapman became the youngest employee at Chicago radio station WGCI. After serving time as a studio assistant and show producer, he joined the staff of on-air personalities; a staff that produced renowned alumni such as Tom Joyner, Doug Banks, Steve Harvey, and Rick Party. Chapman began building a significant following through his Friday night/Saturday morning show called "The Afterset", and made himself memorable to listeners by using a sound bite of legendary actress Eartha Kitt saying "Marcus darling" from the Eddie Murphy film Boomerang. He also worked at several record stores during this period.

After four years of being at the station, MC was the host of WGCI's two hottest weekend shows and the city's number one weekly party. Chapman was then hired by Indianapolis radio station WTLC as host of their nightly 6 to 10 show. While helping WTLC achieve number one ratings at night, Chapman garnered attention from stations in various cities around the country. After nearly landing in New York, Los Angeles, Washington DC, Miami, Philadelphia, and North Carolina, MC was hired by Dallas-Ft. Worth station KKDA, alias K104. Following his stint in Dallas, Marcus returned to Chicago and WGCI. During that time he also worked as a music researcher for the radio data company Mediabase. He tracked the daily playlists of numerous urban stations around the country, and submitted data that was used to compile weekly charts for the industry magazine *Radio & Records*. Chapman then relocated from Chicago to Atlanta, and was heard several times on that city's station WVEE (V103). As of 2015 he resides in Dallas again, and can be

heard on Radio One hip-hop station KBFB 97.9 The Beat, as well as WIBT 104.7 The Beat in Greenville, Mississippi.

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