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ARTIST: Extreme

TITLES: The Best Of Extreme 20th Century Masters The Millennium Collection

CD #: 069 493 165-2

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CD Logo: A&M Records

Attached please find all necessary liner notes and credits for this package.

Beth

Extreme

The Best Of Extreme 20th Century Masters The Millennium Collection

(CD Folder)

Played on Top 40 radio and at countless weddings in 1991, the acoustic ballad “More Than Words” hit #1, went gold, and put Extreme on the musical map. It also undoubtedly confused the hell out of some of the two million-plus people who bought *Pornograffitti*, looking for more of the same. Truth be told, Extreme is a funk-metal band that just happened to hit all the right chords with an uncharacteristic foray into unplugged territory, and to define them by a single, though memorable song does a disservice to their considerable accomplishments.

Extreme’s members traveled in overlapping circles on the mid-’80s music scene in Boston. Vocalist Gary Cherone and drummer Paul Geary were in a band called Dream, while Nuno Bettencourt had gained a reputation as a guitar wizard in outfits like Myth and Sinful. Cherone met Bettencourt in the summer of ’85 and invited him to replace two imminently-departing axemen, and the two quickly became a formidable lyricist-composer team. The band’s self-created video for “Mutha (Don’t Wanna Go To School Today)” won an *MTV Basement Tapes* competition that fall, got into rotation, and upped label interest in the band.

By 1986, bassist Pat Badger, an acquaintance of Bettencourt’s from a music shop, had joined the quartet, now renamed Extreme. Through a deal that allowed them to use a local studio for free during off hours, they had been recording for some time (an EP was released in Boston in 1983), and circulating demos to record labels. Signed by A&M in November 1987, they had 40 songs to choose from for their first album. “Kid Ego,” a jibe at self-important rock stars, was among the ones that made it, though the self-titled disc’s release was delayed for a year amid differences of opinion between the band and the label over the mixes.

Following the album’s March 1989 release, Extreme played their inaugural arena gig in Portland, Maine, with fellow Bostonians, Aerosmith, and also opened for Poison and White Lion as they toured the States for the first time. Audiences and critics embraced Bettencourt’s guitar pyrotechnics, the barefoot Cherone’s vocal and physical acrobatics, and the hard-hitting grooves of songs like “Little Girls” and “Play With Me,” but a non-album cut proved just as popular.

One of many songs Extreme had in its hold file that ended up on 1990’s *Extreme II: Pornograffitti*, “More Than Words” was not its first single; “Decadence Dance” and the horn-flavored “Get the Funk Out” preceded it. But as Extreme toured Europe in the summer of 1990, “More Than Words” hit radio and sent the not-quite-gold album toward the double platinum mark. “We came home to all this success we hadn’t had before,” recalled Cherone. The winning streak continued with fourth single “Hole Hearted,” which Bettencourt began writing on a newly acquired 12-string guitar while on the toilet. The song went to #4 that fall, following Extreme’s summer tours with David Lee Roth and Cinderella and the release of the *Photograffitti* video collection.

After touring Europe and Canada with Bryan Adams, a move frowned upon by many of the band’s fans, Extreme endeavored to underscore their rock roots with 1992’s *III Sides To Every Story*, an intentional departure from its predecessor. Darker and more serious, the bulk of it was written

during discouraging times, before *Pornograffiti's* success. The first of the three sides, entitled "Yours," featured their first single, "Rest In Peace," often performed on the *Porno* tour, while the second side, "Mine," included "Stop The World" and "Tragic Comic." The latter reflected Cherone's awkward first date experiences: "You want to be cool, get everything right and you end up tripping over your feet." The third side, "The Truth," recorded with a 70-piece orchestra at London's Abbey Road studio, was decidedly more experimental.

III Sides... hit #10 and went gold, a disappointment by *Pornograffiti* standards, but 1992 was a great year for Extreme. They performed at the AIDS awareness Concert For Life at London's Wembley Stadium, honoring Queen's Freddie Mercury, and won five trophies at the Boston Music Awards (having previously earned single BMAs in 1986 and 1987, they'd collect four more in 1993).

After touring with Bon Jovi in the summer of '93, Extreme got to work on new music, but outside interests began to divert the members' attentions. Bettencourt, who had produced the rap act TCC and Flesh (featuring both his brother and Cherone's) wanted to do a solo album. A fan of the theater, Cherone starred in a Boston production of *Jesus Christ Superstar* in April 1994, a role he reprised the next year. And Geary, who'd booked the band himself early on and remained involved with the business side, ultimately decided to leave Extreme to manage other acts. He played on *Waiting For The Punchline*, released in February 1995, but Boston resident Mike Mangini, a longtime band acquaintance, took over for a European tour with Aerosmith the previous spring.

The socio-political *Punchline*, featuring the trend-skewering single "Hip Today," didn't catch on, and by the spring of '96 Bettencourt had quit, though Extreme didn't officially disband until October. By then, Cherone had been tapped as the new singer of Van Halen, with whom he spent three years and recorded one album. The Portugal-born Bettencourt, who'd married Australian singer Suze DeMarchi (Baby Animals), put out solo CD *Schizophonic* in 1996 and now fronts Mourning Widows. Mangini recorded and toured with Steve Vai, and Geary managed Godsmack to multi-platinum success. Mangini and Badger now play with Cherone in the Boston-based Tribe of Judah, which Geary, who also owns a local nightclub, advises.

The original Extreme lineup got together for a New Year's Eve show in 1999, but no longer-lasting reunions are planned. The members have moved on, but their musical legacy endures.

Gerri Miller
January 2002

Extreme

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(CD Folder)

- 1) Kid Ego
(Nuno Bettencourt - Gary Cherone)
A&M single 1415
Album Rock #39 / charted 4-8-89
Produced by Extreme
from the A&M album *Extreme* (1989)
- 2) Decadence Dance
(Nuno Bettencourt - Gary Cherone)
Album Rock #45 / charted 9-1-90
Produced by Michael Wagener
from the A&M album *Extreme II: Pornograffitti* (1990)
- 3) More Than Words
(Nuno Bettencourt - Gary Cherone)
A&M single 1552
Pop #1 / charted 3-23-91
Album Rock #12 / charted 3-2-91
Adult Contemporary #2 / charted 5-4-91
Produced by Michael Wagener
from the A&M album *Extreme II: Pornograffitti* (1990)
- 4) Hole Hearted
(Nuno Bettencourt - Gary Cherone)
A&M single 1564
Pop #4 / charted 8-3-91
Album Rock #2 / charted 6-22-91
Adult Contemporary #32 / charted 10-26-91
Produced by Nuno Bettencourt
from the A&M album *Extreme II: Pornograffitti* (1990)
- 5) Get The Funk Out
(Nuno Bettencourt - Gary Cherone)
Album Rock #34 / charted 10-26-91
Produced by Michael Wagener
from the A&M album *Extreme II: Pornograffitti* (1990)
- 6) Rest In Peace

(Nuno Bettencourt - Gary Cherone)
A&M single 0055
Pop #96 / charted 10-24-92
Album Rock #1 / charted 9-12-92
Produced by Michael Wagener
Co-Produced by Bob St. John
from the A&M album *III Sides To Every Story* (1992)

7) Stop The World
(Nuno Bettencourt - Gary Cherone)
A&M single 0120
Pop #95 / charted 2-20-93
Album Rock #9 / charted 12-26-92
Produced by Michael Wagener
Co-Produced by Bob St. John
from the A&M album *III Sides To Every Story* (1992)

8) Am I Ever Gonna Change
(Nuno Bettencourt - Gary Cherone)
Album Rock #10 / charted 4-10-93
Produced by Michael Wagener
Co-Produced by Bob St. John
from the A&M album *III Sides To Every Story* (1992)

9) Tragic Comic
(Nuno Bettencourt - Gary Cherone)
Produced by Michael Wagener
Co-Produced by Bob St. John
from the A&M album *III Sides To Every Story* (1992)

10) Hip Today
(Nuno Bettencourt - Gary Cherone)
Album Rock #26 / charted 2-4-95
Produced by Michael Wagener
Co-Produced by Bob St. John
from the A&M album *Waiting For The Punchline* (1995)

Compilation Produced by Mike Ragogna
Mastered by Elliott Federman @ SAJE Sound - New York, NY
Production Coordinator: Beth Leather Stempel
Editorial Assistance: Barry Korkin
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Photo Research:

Photos:

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- 1) Kid Ego
- 2) Decadence Dance
- 3) More Than Words
- 4) Hole Hearted
- 5) Get The Funk Out
- 6) Rest In Peace
- 7) Stop The World
- 8) Am I Ever Gonna Change
- 9) Tragic Comic
- 10) Hip Today

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(Sticker copy)

Features ALL the big hits including "More Than Words" and "Hole Hearted"
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