

NEW TWO-CD COMPILATION LOVE AND AFFECTION: JOAN ARMATRADING CLASSICS (1975-1983) OFFERS HER BEST-KNOWN SONGS PLUS SEVERAL TRACKS MAKING THEIR U.S. OR CD DEBUTS

When VH1 announced its millennium-ending "100 Greatest Women of Rock 'n' Roll," Joan Armatrading was among them. In the U.K., she has been its most important black female singer-songwriter. In the U.S., she continues to enjoy a loyal cult following. Before Tracy Chapman, Sarah McLachlan or Jewel there was the pioneering Armatrading.

The two-CD **Love And Affection: Joan Armatrading Classics (1975-1983)** (A&M/UME), released April 1, 2003, brings together 43 of her essential early recordings, each digitally remastered from the original master tapes. Though with a similar title as a late '90s two-CD compilation, this **Love And Affection** focuses on her most popular, influential period rather than span her career. Along with her best-known work, such as "Me Myself I," "Drop The Pilot" and "Down To Zero," the collection includes the complete How Cruel EP--released intact for the first time anywhere on CD--and never-U.S.-released-in-any-format live performances of "Mama Mercy" and "Steppin' Out."

Love And Affection: Joan Armatrading Classics (1975-1983) begins with her second album, Back To The Night. Her Caribbean roots underscored much of her early material, including the album's "Cool Blue Stole My Heart" and "Travel So Far." But it was her 1976 self-titled third album, for which she was backed by alumni of Fairport Convention, which catapulted her into the limelight, scoring her only U.K. Top 10 single, "Love And Affection," and the gospel flavored "Down To Zero." **Love And Affection** also includes "The Flight Of The Wild Geese," her theme song to the action film The Wild Geese.

1977's Show Some Emotion went U.K. Top 10 and included the lilting "Willow." To The Limit followed the next year with tracks such as "Bottom To The Top." She ended the decade with the live Steppin' Out, recorded in America but unreleased here. 1979 also yielded How Cruel, comprised of four new studio tracks.

The rockier, electric Me Myself I in 1980 proved to be her American breakthrough. Backed by a band that included drummer Anton Fig, guitarist Chris Spedding and members of the E Street Band, the result was a U.S. Top 30 album and U.K. hits with the title track as well as the ballad "All The Way From America." Her U.K. hit albums continued with Walk Under Ladders (1981), with the famed Jamaican rhythm section of Sly Dunbar and Robbie Shakespeare, New Wave notables Andy Partridge and Thomas Dolby, and "The Weakness In Me" (one of her most covered songs). The Key (1983), with "Drop The Pilot," one of her biggest U.K. hits, again cracked the U.S. Top 40. Track Record, a compilation released later that year, added two new numbers, the infectious "Frustration" and the ballad "Heaven."

With a pair of Grammy nominations and gold or platinum albums in several countries, today Joan Armatrading continues to record and tour and expand her legacy.

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