

MUSIC

Greatest Hits: My Prerogative

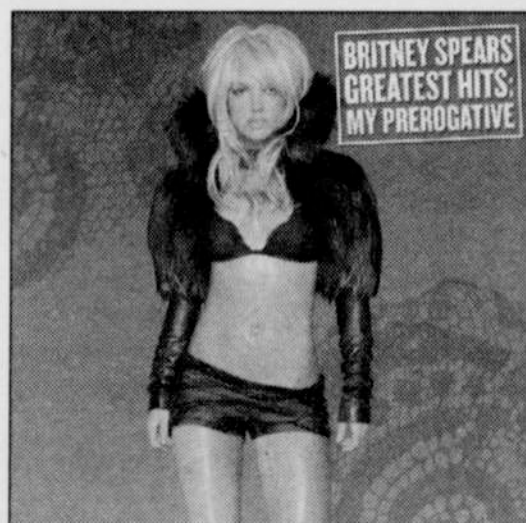
Britney Spears • Jive Records

"Why can't I live my life without all of the things that people say?" Britney Spears whines on the title track, a remake of Bobby Brown's 1988 hit.

Well, sweetie, since you asked: We keep talking about you because you keep doing stupid things! We swear, the moment you wise up, we'll lay off.

In the meantime, we're witnessing her devolution from pop princess to prefab personification of America's red-blue dichotomy: She's spent the past six years posing as an MTV-approved girl gone wild, but deep down we all know she'd rather be back in Louisiana making babies and judging her neighbors. I, for one, wish to set her free.

My animosity toward Brit began last year, when she made a mockery of marriage with her 55-hour "joke gone too far." This came just four months after her infamous gum-smacking statement, "Honestly, I think we should just trust our president in every decision he makes and



Who's the greatest of them all?

Dueling divas hit me, baby, one more time,
and I can't get them out of my head

BY JIM RADOSTA

should just support that, you know, and be faithful in what happens."

Unfortunately for us, Britney's lyrics are equally vapid. "I want to believe everything that you say, 'cause it sounds so good," she croons on "Sometimes." And for those who haven't gotten the message yet, she devotes an entire song to her "Outrageous" sex life, party stamina and shopping habits. Girl power rocks!

Yeah, I'll admit Britney is an easy target. So let me give props where they're due: I like dancing to her ellipsis songs ("...Baby One More Time" and "Oops!... I Did It Again"), and the recent tunes "Toxic" and "I've Just

Begun (Having My Fun)" are pretty damn catchy—although credit for those two must be shared with producers Bloodshy & Avant.

Even though I don't dig Britney as a person, I haven't lost hope in her. Looking toward the presumed 2010 release of *Greatest Hits 2*, I sincerely hope she heeds the wise words that Madonna sings to her on "Me Against the Music": "Hey, Britney, you say you want to lose control? Sexy lady, I'd rather see you bare your soul."

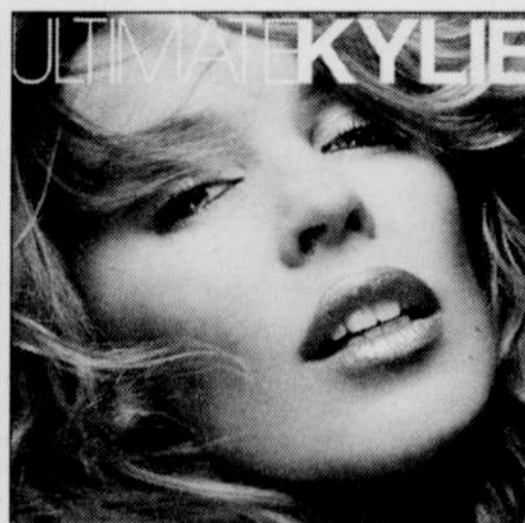
Ultimate Kylie

Kylie Minogue • EMI Records

It's not nothing like the real thing, baby. Whereas Britney Spears' position as a gay icon is a transparent marketing strategy to crown her as the next Madonna, Kylie Minogue has earned her royal stature.

The Aussie soap opera star made a big splash with her 1988 remake of "The Loco-Motion," a sure-fire hit considering it had already topped the charts in both 1962 (Little Eva) and 1974 (Grand Funk).

Then...nothing. Kylie disappeared from U.S. airwaves until her 2001 comeback smash "Can't Get You Out of My Head," which the country couldn't get out of its head for months.



When she performed it on an episode of *Saturday Night Live* hosted by Sir Ian McKellen, the gay thesp could even be seen sitting on the edge of the stage bopping his head to the rhythm. Kylie, as far as the queer boys were concerned, was now officially the shit.

So, what the hell was she doing throughout that 13-year hiatus? Achieving world domination, darling.

Much like Robbie Williams, Kylie has an international following that never grabbed hold in the United States. The two-disc set *Ultimate Kylie* catches us up on those lost years, which were initially dominated by Stock, Aiken & Waterman, a slick songwriting team (Rick Astley's "Never Gonna Give You Up," Donna Summer's "This Time I Know It's for Real") with an uncanny ability to make every song sound the same.

Fortunately, she soon outgrew them and started collaborating with edgy artists like Nick Cave & the Bad Seeds (1995's moody "Where the Wild Roses Grow") and co-writing dance classics like "Love at First Sight" (hands down her best song ever) and "Slow" (which just lost the Best Dance Recording Grammy to Britney's "Toxic").

Unlike many greatest hits packages with a couple of token unreleased tracks, the new stuff on *Ultimate Kylie* is outstanding. "Giving You Up" is crammed with addictive hooks, and "I Believe in You" is a dreamy collaboration with Jake Shears and Babydaddy, the gay members of Scissor Sisters.

Incidentally, Shears recently made headlines when he outed Robbie Williams, Kylie's duet partner on the rousing anthem "Kids," which also appears on this collection. Clearly, this is one diva with good gaydar. **JR**

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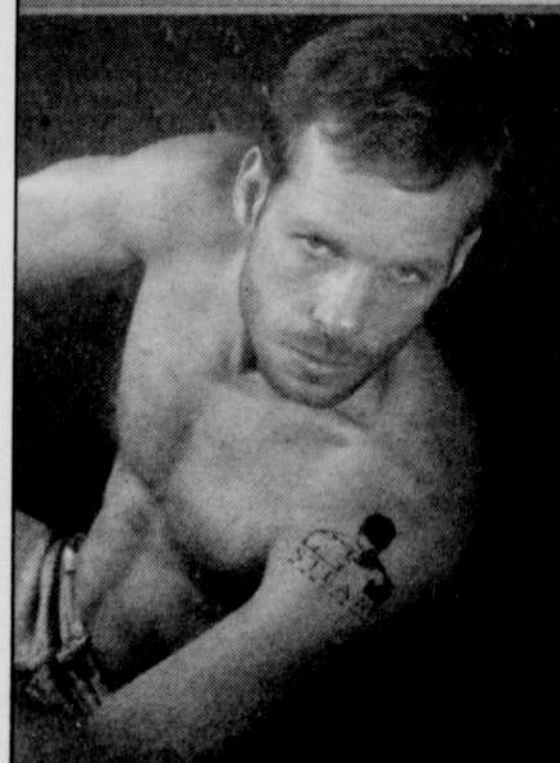
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