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SexionQ

How Do You Say Deee-Best?

Nineties Funksters Reignited for Greatest Hits Release

By Ian Drew

When the Lady Miss Kier arrestingly emerged across MTV screens in 1990, she was not yet an icon but sure looked like one. Purring in Franglais while doing runway in Deee-Lite's now famous *Groove is in the Heart* video, Kier presented a refreshing antithesis to a music scene that was just beginning to be coated in the harsh realities of grunge and gangsta rap.

This bold statement did not go unnoticed. *Groove is in the Heart*, with its sliding whistles, funk samples and unavoidable hook, became an instant party jam classic, and worked its groove up to number four on the Billboard pop charts. The accompanying video made Deee-Lite into international harbingers of cool with lead singer Kier's wild catsuit and Fleuvog-platform shoes, bandmates Supa DJ Dmitri and Jungle DJ Towa Towa jamming out on the turntables and guest



Lady Miss Kier

The world's grooveaholics still wait to see what will become of Deee-Lite's now scattered members.

appearances from Bootsy Collins and rapper Q-tip.

Rhino Records is known for releasing comprehensive Best Of collections for artists past their heyday, which makes it a little sad to see that they have now done it for Deee-Lite. With the November release of *The Very Best of Deee-Lite*, the true scope, vitality and originality of the band is represented while still making listeners wonder how they ever were scooted into one-hit-wonder status.

The early successes from the trio's first album, *World Clique*, are vividly represented here with the clubland anthems *What is Love?*, *Power of Love* and *Good Beat*, as are songs from their vastly underrated second album, *Infinity Within*. The tracks selected for *The Very Best of Deee-Lite* lay testimony to the fact that the fault of the band's lack of staying power was not in their sound, but probably in the major label politics that they blame for their eventual breakup. Deee-Lite successfully kept their brew going on *Infinity* while mixing it with political acuity, as evidenced here in the tracks *Pussycat Meow*, *Heart Be Still* and *I Had A Dream I Was Falling Through A Hole in the Ozone Layer*.

This collection also features a brilliant sampling of work from their final studio album, the rave-inspired *Dewdrops in the Garden*. Included here are the deep house infused *Somebody* and the acid jazz underpinnings of *Say Ahhh...* and *Party Happening People*. The playful poetics coming from Kier's journal have become Deee-Lite staples, and are represented in this compilation by tracks *Picnic in the Summertime*, *Mind Melt* and *Apple Juice Kissing*.

Bittersweet Loving, a rousing house track, is also on this collection, and it lyrically gives another indication of what was the final nail in Deee-Lite's floral coffin - the romantic breakup of Kier and Dmitri. The group would disband after the *Dewdrops* tour and go on to collaborate on 1996's *Sampladelic Relics and Dancefloor Oddities*, a remix album.

The world's grooveaholics still wait to see what will become of Deee-Lite's now scattered members. Dmitri has recently released a solo LP, and Towa continues to be a huge dance music star in Japan. Kier has kept busy with DJ gigs of her own and rare guest spots, but fans still pine for the long-promised solo release of her own.

This collection should help to fill in the gaps until the next movement. Beautifully assembled by Rhino, *The Very Best of Deee-Lite* is an excellent documentation of the band that defined early-Nineties style and sound with their own sonorous conception. It also makes those that were briefly caught up in the rapture of their groove wonder how this one ever got away.

Rock the Bells

Vocal Group Featured On Christmas CD

Rockapella, a five-member male vocal group that has gained popularity for its unique acapella blend of soul, rock, r&b and jazz, again offers special sounds for the holidays on their 2000 released *rockapella Christmas* in time for the holidays.

Best known for their regular appearances on the PBS children's program *Where in the World is Carmen Sandiego?* and various television commercials, the group has also released three other albums on J-Bird Records - their US debut, *Don't Tell Me You Do*, the follow-up release 2 and *rockapella: In Concert*.



Such favorites as *Winter Wonderland*, *The Christmas Song* and *You're A Mean One, Mr. Grinch* are all featured on the disc, which relies mostly on their gorgeous, layered harmonies. The disc was the group's first release to chart on Billboard, and was a featured stocking stuffer in 30,000 last year.