

STUDENT LIFE

Pop List: Top ten one-hit wonders of the '90s, Part Two

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This top ten list of my favorite one-hit wonders of the '90s is a continuation from last week's issue. If you missed it, here's ten through six: 10. Chumbawamba's "Tubthumping" (1997) 9. The Proclaimers' "I'm Gonna Be (500 Miles)" (1993) 8. Meredith Brooks' "Bitch" (1997) 7. Deee-lite's "Groove Is In the Heart" (1990) and 5. Divinyls' "I Touch Myself" (1990).

5 Los Del Rio "Macarena" 1996



I was 11 years old when "Macarena" set a new standard for publicly embarrassing oneself. As a part of our aerobic exercise program in my fifth grade phys-ed class, we were required to do the electric slide to Billy Ray Cyrus' "Achy Breaky Heart." Okay, this isn't that bad, I thought. Then, Mr. Boyd, our instructor, flipped the cassette tape (cassette tape!) and all hell broke loose: arms flailing, legs kicking, hips lying (Shakira anyone?) all over the place – the "Macarena" was in full effect. As enthusiastic about pop music as I was, I just absolutely had to put my foot down and refuse to shake my skinny white pelvis to "Hey Macarena!" even if it meant performing poorly in gym. Unfortunately, I was only one of the few who decided not to participate in this phenomenon. I mean, do you remember Al Gore doing the "Macarena" (or something similar to) at the 1996 Democratic Convention? Jesus, it was everywhere! Not only did the song peak at the number one position on Billboard's Hot 100 chart, it stayed on the chart for 60 weeks! How? Why? Well, I guess it's a matter of unity. "Macarena" brought people, all different kinds of people, together. It gave people, or a majority of, a commonality. Who'd have ever thought that children and middle-aged politicians would be doing some hokey Latin-rumba-pop dance together?

4 Des'ree "You Gotta Be" 1994



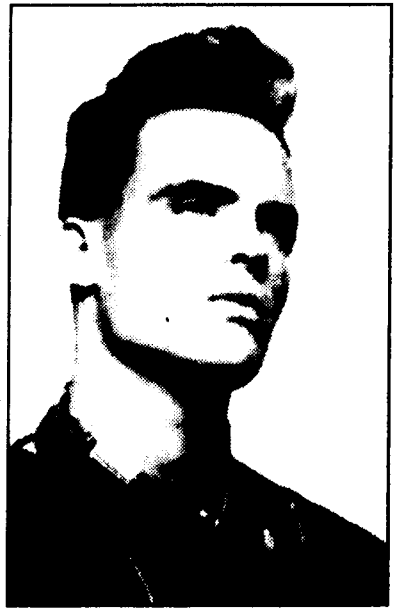
London-born Desiree Weeks, known to most as Des'ree, is one of Britain's most successful female vocalists of the 1990s. In the U.S., however, she's recognized for her one and only hit, "You Gotta Be," an inspiring song celebrating and encouraging diversity, tolerance, acceptance, love – just about everything under the sun. This message, along with Des'ree's cool and confident vocal contribution, is what really made the song so successful. It spent nine consecutive months, from September 1994 to June 1995, on the Billboard Hot 100 chart, peaking at the number 5 position in March of 1995. "You Gotta Be" is also a prime example of how a song can blossom into a hit just from video airplay: the song's clip, shot in black and white and featuring an exuberant Des'ree dancing, holds the record for being the most-played video ever on VHI. The black and white-colored video exemplifies the simplicity of the song, the simplicity of beauty, the simplicity of success.

3 Blind Melon "No Rain" 1992



It was an early-'90s staple on MTV: the "Bee Girl video," also known as the video set to one of rock's most light-hearted and uplifting songs. From the finger snaps to the warm, breezy guitars to lead singer Shannon Hoon's raspy, shaky Southern vocals, "No Rain" easily won over fan with its message of individuality and acceptance. While the song reached number 20 on Billboard's Hot 100 chart, the accompanying video was essential to the band's commercial success: a girl, dressed in a bumblebee outfit, dancing by herself to a routine around town, but eventually, upon stumbling into a field, finds other girls dressed like bees, boosting her self-esteem and Blind Melon's album sales. Eventually, the band's eponymous debut would hit platinum record status four times, meaning it's moved over four million copies since its release in 1992. After "No Rain," there were no more hits for the band. Following years of struggling with drug addiction, 28-year-old Hoon died of a cocaine overdose in October of 1995 – only two months after the band released *Soup*, its sophomore album. In 1999, Blind Melon officially disbanded, but as of last week, Billboard reported that the band's recruited a new vocalist and is recording a new album. However vain and temporary this reprisal may be, "No Rain" will remain a permanent marker in not only one-hit wonder history, but rock history as well.

2 Vanilla Ice "Ice Ice Baby" 1990



"If there was a problem / Yo, I'll solve it / Check out the hook / While DJ revolves it." Too cold, Vanilla, too cold. Along with MC Hammer, Vanilla Ice ushered in a new wave of pop-rap with his signature song, "Ice Ice Baby." With its funky, hijacked bassline (from Queen's 1981 hit "Under Pressure") and slick, flamboyant lyrics ("I'm cooking MCs like a pound of bacon / Burning them if they're not quick and nimble"), "Ice Ice Baby" melted its way into the minds of white boys who wanted to be black and the pants of white girls who wanted to bang Vanilla Ice. The former would come to be Vanilla Ice's greatest criticism from the African-American community – his "watering-down" of hip-hop and its culture. The baggy pants, the fade in the hair, a sham childhood (Ice claimed he was from the ghetto, but was actually raised in a suburb of Dallas) – it was all for entertainment's sake, totally unauthentic. It was, however, the first time a white rap artist broke through to the mainstream. In November of 1990, a month after its official release, the single had already hit number one on Billboard's Hot 100 chart and sold millions of copies. Influential? Not so much. Unforgettable? Absolutely.

1 White Town "Your Woman" 1997



While it may not be one of the most groundbreaking or memorable or catchy of the one-hit wonders I've compiled, "Your Woman" definitely my favorite. White Town is one man – Indian-born Jyoti Mishra, who'd released several EPs between the early 90s before signing with EMI in the late 90s. While the song originally appeared on the EP *Abort, Retry, Fail?*, "Your Woman" is best-known from White Town's major-label debut, *Women in Technology*, released in 1997. The song was a refreshing bit of techno-tinged pop, with its uncanny shuffling beat, computer blips and bleeps, an unexpectedly silent film-like trumpet sample, and sexually ambiguous vocal delivery. (I didn't know it was a man singing the song until the summer of 2005 when I finally had the sense to look online and find out.) Not only are Mishra's vocals androgynous, but he sings from the perspective of a woman: "Well I guess what you say is true / I could never be the right kind of girl for you / I could never be your woman." While the song subtly raises issues like sexism, on face value its deliciously pulsating easily beat moves the body. "Your Woman" is a perfect mish-mash of politics and pop.

ALL PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

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