

## **SMOOTH FUNK SHINES BRIGHT ON THE BEST OF ATLANTIC STARR**

Atlantic Starr had the smooth funk thang down. One of funk-soul's stellar acts, Atlantic Starr claimed Top 20 R&B hits in the '70s, '80s and '90s, and is still heard today at the funkier gatherings. A cool dozen of those Top 20 hits, from 1978's "Stand Up" to 1987's #1 R&B/#1 pop "Always," each digitally remastered, have now been brought together on **The Best Of Atlantic Starr** edition of **20<sup>th</sup> Century Masters/The Millennium Collection** (A&M/UME), released July 17, 2001.

Formed in upstate New York in 1976 by the brothers Lewis (guitarist-vocalist David, trombonist Jonathan and keyboardist-vocalist Wayne), Atlantic Starr soon headed west to Los Angeles. With singer Sharon Bryant, a surprisingly rare female lead vocalist for a funk band, Atlantic Starr hit the ground running after signing to A&M. It was Wayne, however, who sang lead on the group's first R&B Top 20, the showtime anthem "Stand Up" from its self-titled 1978 debut album.

From 1980's Radiant, its third album, Bryant's dusky-to-gutsy lead on the cautionary "When Love Calls" sent the song to #5 R&B while Wayne sang lead for the Top 20 R&B "Send For Me." With Bryant up front, the sunny "Circles" (#2 R&B, Top 40 pop) and come hither "Love Me Down" (Top 20 R&B) rocketed 1982's Brilliance to #1 Soul for three weeks. Bryant also led the coy, teasing "Touch A Four Leaf Clover" (#4 R&B) and joined Wayne for the love duet "More, More, More" (#11 R&B), both from 1983's Yours Forever.

Ironically, Atlantic Starr would enjoy its biggest success on its final A&M album, and after Bryant's departure for a solo career. With replacement Barbara Weathers, the band's 1986 album As The Band Turns became its biggest-selling disk, going gold as it featured the cheatin' song "Secret Lovers" (#4 R&B/#3 pop) as well as "If Your Heart Isn't In It" (#4 R&B), the outrageous "Freak-A-Ristic" (#6 R&B) and the Top 20 "Silver Shadow."

The group's first album for Warner Bros., 1987's All In The Name Of Love, didn't miss a beat as "Always," co-produced by Earth, Wind & Fire's Maurice White, became Atlantic Starr's only #1 pop and #1 R&B hit. A popular wedding song, the David-Barbara duet helped earn Atlantic Starr its second gold album.

Though “Always” is the final track on **The Best Of Atlantic Starr**, the band continued on with a string of female singers and a handful of Top 10 R&B hits, including the gold single “Masterpiece,” through the early ‘90s. After an absence of a few years, Atlantic Starr re-emerged in late 1999 with a contemporary gospel album titled Legacy. As for the group’s funk legacy, that can be heard on **The Best Of Atlantic Starr**.

The series **20<sup>th</sup> Century Masters/The Millennium Collection** features new “best of” albums from the most significant music artists of the past century.

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