

# Waiting To Exhale: Soundtrack

Music Review



Various Artists (Arista)  
Grade: A+

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December 22 has come and gone so now the wait is finally over. No more Exhale parties or OPRAH specials.

Whether you thought it was brilliant or male-bashing, shallow, with a soap opera style promoting negative portrayals of African-American women as desperate and foolish, you owe it to yourself to make that trip to Blockbuster Music or Camelot and check out the slamming soundtrack coming out of this phenomenon.

Sixteen smooth tracks produced by music-maker extraordinaire, Kenneth "Babyface" Edmonds, (featuring a blend of 15 pop, soul, gospel and hip-hop divas from the past two generations) take you on an emotional joy ride through relationships. A project like this, where you get so many talented sistas in one place at the same time, could seem at first to be trouble. But if they all have a purpose and are talking about something real, it's all about power and support.

The first cut on the CD, Whitney Houston's "Exhale (Shoop Shoop)", one of three of her appearances on the soundtrack, tells of both the successes and failures of most relationships, setting the over all theme of the CD to be broken down in upcoming tracks.

The soundtrack takes us from the first attraction where many females sit by the phone waiting for that little cutie to call to find out if there is any chance they'll be able to get that party started, with Brandy's light-hearted "Sittin' Up In My Room," to Sonja Marie's, plea for trust and mutual exchange of love in the jazzy "And I Gave My Love To You."

When it comes to talking about sex, the trios of SWV and TLC have



the subject on locked down. TLC's "This Is How It Works" keys men in on how to please the woman in their life, and the need to "Make it smooth/Make it last" rather than being all out for self.

Don't sleep on the '60s flavor given off from legendary soul sistas Chaka Khan and Patti, whose distinctly seasoned voices, scream of experience as they promise dedication to their man. Both Whitney and Aretha give dynamic performances in their soulful ballads about loving too hard and what to do when as Aretha puts it in "It Hurts Like Hell": "Sometimes it hurts to love so bad when you know you've given all you can" and it's still not enough.

You've done everything for him, made sacrifices, stood by his side and all for what, for him to all of a sudden up and decide to leave you for his White bookkeeper? Don't have room for the pain anymore? Think you deserve better? Take the advice of one of the strongest, soul-searching cuts on the soundtrack,

"Not Gon' Cry", performed by hip-hop's sultry songstress, Mary J. Blige. Eleven years of commitment and trust and it's over like that. I hate to think.

But before you go ballistic and start sending up smoke signals from his blazing Beemer, Legend or Cadillac Coupe Deville, think about it. He's not worth your time and you sho' 'nuff can do bad by yourself. So don't stress, go hang-out with Toni, get it together and just "Let It Flow."

By the end of the CD, on Whitney and CeCe Winans' "Count On Me" you've been from the valley to the mountaintop and you've survived by the grace of the divine one and supportive friends. Friends, who although they told you he wasn't the one, when you really need them, they've got your back.

So it's all right...go on...take a risk...exhale but stay strong. We've all been there. (Other cuts on the soundtrack reveal strong performances by Faith, For Real, Chanté Moore and newcomer Shanna.)

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