Top 10 Singles Make Great Gifts

Well…we’re at the tail-end of 2002, and it’s time once again to round up the best singles of the year. Not a single #1 song (we only had eight this year total, five of which were by Ja Rule, Ashanti, Nelly, or some combination of the three) made the final cut, and three of the final picks didn’t even make the charts at ALL, so the best records weren’t necessarily the biggest hits. And the 10 best singles are …

10. “The Barry Williams Show,” Peter Gabriel (Geffen)
An eccentric, cold, sinister parody of “Jerry Springer”-style shows, completely alienating on first listen but sinking in quickly, peeling back new layers of genius with each listen. And you can dance to it, too. Blatantly un-commercial (hence why it didn’t chart), but one of Gabriel’s best—and most wildly intriguing—singles.

Arguably the best up-tempo single the Goo Goo Dolls have made to date, even if it didn’t scale the heights of any of the Dizzy Up the Girl singles. Beautiful chorus, great set of lyrics, gorgeous guitar work, and stellar production job.

8. “All My Life,” Foo Fighters (RCA)
I like Dave Grohl’s mellow stuff (especially “Aurora”) the best, but as far as loud and raucous, scream-heavy modern-rock goes, you can’t ask for anything more melodic and catchy as this. Great hook, great vocals. Crank the volume up!

7. “Complicated,” Avril Lavigne (Arista)
Yeah, radio played it way too much (as they tend to do just about everything), but when you look past the non-stop hype, “Complicated” is actually a really great song, and one of the few relevant, non-constrained, and truly melodic pieces of teen pop of the last year. The merits of “Sk8er Boi” are debatable, but …

6. “The Middle,” Jimmy Eat World (DreamWorks)
OK, the video’s really ridicu-
lous, but the song? The song was the first truly great single of the year. Great lyrics, great message, insanely catchy hook, and some seriously high-octane, heart-pounding playing.

5. “Love at First Sight,” Kylie Minogue (Capitol)
Yeah, the lyrics are enormous-
ously simplistic and cliched, but dance records don’t get any more irresistible than this. Uplift, charming, and with an infectious disco-made dance groove to boot. Basically, it’s the kind of great record Madonna used to make before she started tak-
ing herself too seriously.

A record that single-handedly restored my faith that quality R&B is not entirely dead. Very soulful stuff. Best R&B-recorded song of the year, even if it missed the charts entirely and got almost no attention whatsoever.

3. (tie) “No Such Thing” and “Your Body Is a Wonderland,” John Mayer (Columbia)
Proof that there are still some intelligent singer-songwriters in mainstream pop. High-quality songwriting, and immaculately-recorded records, right down to the tiniest touches, like the jazz chords during the break in “Wonderland” and the toy piano tagged onto the end.

2. “Sparklin,” Rubyhorse (Island)
There’s absolutely no way this song should have missed the Top 40, and it wouldn’t have, either, if radio had actually bothered to play it. Imagine New Order, U2, and Del Amitri all rolled into one, and you’ve got some idea.

Unquestionably the best pop single of the year, from the songwriter who gave us “You Get What You Give.” A retro-flavored record that manages to sound like a cross between early-’70s Carole King and…well, New Radicals, actually, with a twist of Santana’s trademark sound thrown in, all topped with the best vocal performance I’ve ever heard out of Branch and one of the most incessantly catchy choruses I’ve heard in a long time. Why this record still hasn’t gone to #1, whereas “Smooth” was there for a dozen weeks, is beyond me.

Compiled by Dana Lynn Flatekval, Managing Editor

By Jeffrey Fiedler, Staff Writer

ZBT throws a party for families

By Tim Green
Staff Writer

What started as a joke about one of the brothers of Zeta Beta Tau (ZBT), inspired the fraternity to organize a dinner for underprivileged families, which will be held on Saturday, Dec. 7.

“We were sitting outside one night and I was sitting in the chair near the front door wearing my 49ers jersey and someone said I would make a great Santa Claus,” said David Soffen, event organizer. “The next thing I knew we were planning a dinner for underprivileged families.”

The dinner will be held for three local families at Lawrenceville Presbyterian Church from 4 to 7 p.m. It will be completely catered by ZBT. Everything a family would wish for during the holidays will be present.

“We are providing food, gifts and hopefully a Christmas tree, if we can find one,” Soffen said.

Most of the money for this event was raised by setting up bins to collect spare change. The change bins were set up in the ZBT fraternity house, as well as Crystal Diner and CVS.

The fraternity is also hoping to have Santa Claus at the event, but Soffen doesn’t think he will be able to play the role like he originally intended.

“I was planning on being Santa Claus, but I don’t think I can find a suit big enough for me,” he said as he burst into jolly laughter.

ZBT worked with the Homefront organization, a group dedicated to helping needy families in Mercer County, which provided the families for the event.

“I feel great that we can reach a younger population that are so willing to volun-
teer their time to help make these peoples lives better,” said Frontella Cawley, special programs coordinator for Homefront.

Cawley said the families attending are appreciative to the men of ZBT.

“They really enjoy it,” she said.

See “Celebration” on page 14