

# Reviews

## Gift lists include 'greatest hits' albums



By Chuck Lovejoy

The onset of the holiday season often brings the consumer the anxiety and confusion related to holiday gift-giving.

As Christmas draws closer, and the time for exchanging gifts approaches with it, most people rack their brains trying to decide on that perfect gift. This year, record companies across America have decided to take some of this burden off the consumer.

This holiday season the record stores have been flooded with a wave of "greatest hits" albums by performers from every area of the musical spectrum. Because each consists of an artist's best-known songs, the albums are perfect gifts for any music lover.

Leading the group of albums are several by a pack of rock music's oldest and most successful groups, including Fleetwood Mac, REO Speedwagon, Journey and The Who.

Fleetwood Mac's *Greatest Hits* examines the group's 20-year career and also includes two new songs, Christine McVie's "As Long As You Follow," a great new single, and Stevie Nicks' "No Questions Asked." The cassette and CD formats contain three hits not included on the album format.

*The Hits*, REO Speedwagon's greatest, likewise contains new tracks. The group's latest song, "Here With Me," and "Don't Want to Lose You" are both deserving of their places on the album.

Journey's hits collection doesn't contain any new songs, but does contain two songs formerly

available only on movie soundtracks — "Only the Young" and "Ask the Lonely."

In honor of The Who's 25th anniversary, MCA Records has released *Who's Better, Who's Best*. The two-record set spans the group's one-quarter century career from their early hit, "My Generation," to their '80s classic "You Better, You Bet."

In the solo rock category, Paul Simon is represented with *Negotiations and Love Songs, 1971-1986*, which examines Simon's career from his days with Art Garfunkel to his recent bestselling album, *Graceland*.

Kiss, a long-surviving hard rock group, is destined to make waves with its album, *Smashes, Thrashes and Hits*. Kiss' hits album contains a new version of their classic ballad "Beth," with drummer Eric Carr on vocals.

Two new songs on the record should drive the Parents' Music Resource Center, the conservative group advocating a rating system for rock albums, completely crazy. The songs' titles, "Let's Put the X in Sex" and "You Make Me Rock Hard," speak for themselves.



The best of a couple of newer pop/rock groups are also in stores.

R.E.M.'s greatest are featured on *Eponymous*, an album compiled by the group's former label, IRS Records, against the band's wishes. The band objected to the album because its release coincided with the release of their new album, *Green*, and because they simply do not like greatest hits albums.

Still, the IRS collection is worth a look. It contains several R.E.M. classics and a few reworkings of older tunes, including the original version of "Radio Free Europe," an alternate version of "Gardening at Night" and a remix of "Finest Worksong." Another song, "Romance," which was previously unavailable on any R.E.M. album, is also included.



Another young group, the British trio Bananarama, has released *The Greatest Hits Collection*. Along with the older songs, the album contains the group's latest dance smash, "Love, Truth and Honesty."

Rock performers are not the only ones to release hits collections. Some of country music's best have similar albums in the stores.

The mother-daughter duo, the Judds, recorded two new songs for their hits album, "Give a Little Love" and "Change of Heart." The remainder of the album consists of their best gentle songcraft.

Country soloists Kenny Rogers and Reba McEntire also have new greatest hits albums, although neither of theirs contains any new material. Considering the popularity of these two stars, their albums are still a sure bet for a good gift.

The rhythmic hits of Earth, Wind & Fire are available on *The Best of Earth, Wind & Fire Vol. II*, a danceable collection which also includes their latest dance floor anthem, "Turn On (The Beat Box)."

The synthesizer-based songs of

Art of Noise make up *The Best of Art of Noise*. A highlight of the album is the band's new single, a remake of Prince's "Kiss," which features Las Vegas regular Tom Jones on vocals. The song also contains computer sampled tidbits of some of the group's previous singles, including "Peter Gunn" and "Paranoimia," both of which are featured on the album.

For those with a more comical taste, "Weird Al" Yankovic's *Greatest Hits* is sure to please. The Prince of Parody's album contains all his classics, including his two Michael Jackson takeoffs, "Eat It" and "Fat," and his Madonna spoof, "Like a Surgeon."

Because they contain the best of some of music's best, any one of these albums, or several, are sure to please any music lover. Plus, the buyer can be sure they will be played more than once.

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