

REVIEWS

SINGLES

KANYE WEST & JAY-Z

H.A.M. (4:37)

Producers: Lex Luger, Kanye West

Writers: K. West, S.C. Carter, L.A.

Lewis, M. Dean

Publishers: various

Roc-a-Fella/Roc Nation/Def Jam/IDJMG

Critics and fans alike have expressed mixed emotions over "H.A.M.," the first single off Kanye West and Jay-Z's highly anticipated collaborative album, "Watch the Throne." Simply put: The song is good, but could have been better. Producer Lex Luger gives listeners a loaded beat full of psychedelic bang, with strings and opera-like hollers catering to fans with short attention spans. Unfortunately, the verses from these two hip-hop MVPs leave a lot to be desired. With all the explicit lyrics in his bar, West sounds too much like an ordinary hard-talking rapper and less like the vulnerable MC his fans appreciate. And while Jay-Z's lyrics sport a personal vibe, including mentions of his late uncle and nephew, the verse somehow still feels hollow. While "H.A.M." is a bit underwhelming, fans likely won't skip it when listening to the rest of "Throne."—MC



from despite his better judgment. Saadiq's talents as a singer, songwriter and producer allow him to craft a convincing throwback to a sound that his audience might not be old enough to remember.—EJN

COUNTRY

EASTON CORBIN

I Can't Love You Back (4:05)

Producer: Carson

Chamberlain

Writers: C. Chamberlain,

C. Daniels, J. Hyde

Publishers: FSMGI/WCCR

Music administered by State

One Music America (IMRO/

BMI), Sony/ATV Music

Publishing/Mammaw's

Cornbread Music (BMI)

Mercury Records

With his chart-topping debut

single "A Little More Country

Than That," Easton Corbin be-

came one of country music's

most successful new artists. He

followed with the engaging hit

"Roll With It," but on this third

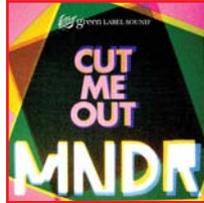
single, he slows down the

tempo and reveals just how ef-

fective he can be as a balladeer.

Penned by Carson Chamber-

lain, Clint Daniels and Jeff Hyde,



MNDR

Cut Me Out (3:15)

Producer: Peter Wade

Keusch

Writers: A. Warner,

P.W. Keusch

Publishers: SONGS Music

Publishing (SESAC), 120

Music/Kobalt (ASCAP)

Green Label Sound

MNDR recently secured a

spot on Chromeo's Risky

Business tour, and judging

from new single "Cut Me Out,"

the upstart New York duo will fit

in perfectly with its elec-

tro-funk audience. The track

features airy synthesizers and

heavily relies on vocal repeti-

tion, with sugary "oh oh oh"

sounds and the song title being

echoed in the hook. Singer

Amanda Warner, who recently

breathed life into the Mark

Ronson single "Bang Bang

Bang," possesses the vocal

quirkiness of Santigold and

the peppy style of the Sounds'

Maja Ivarsson as she works

over the single's steady beat.

While the song loses some of

its luster with repeated

hearings, "Cut Me Out" is a

solid club record and an im-

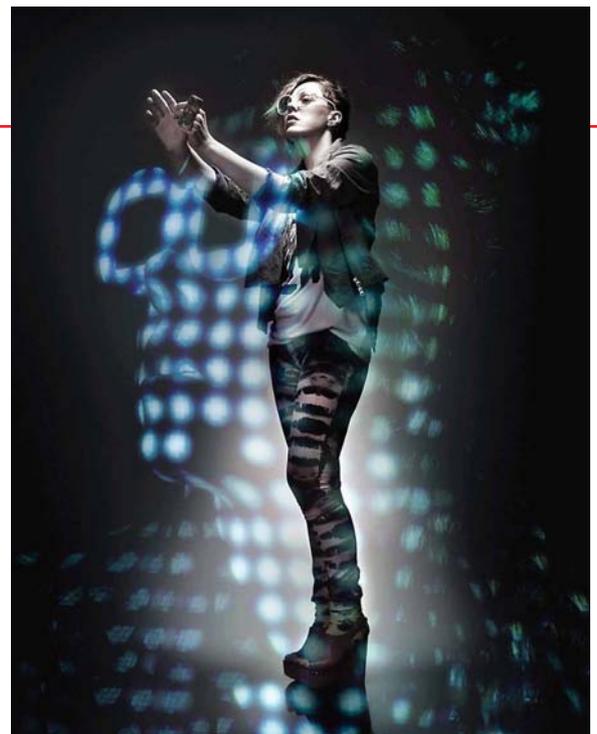
pressive step toward main-

stream success for the pair,

which plans to release its

debut full-length in

early 2011.—KR



R&B

RAPHAEL SAADIQ

Radio (3:21)

Producer: Raphael Saadiq

Writer: R. Saadiq

Publisher: Ugmo Music/

Universal Music Publishing

(ASCAP)

Columbia Records

Raphael Saadiq skillfully emu-

lated '60s and '70s soul on his

2008 album "The Way I See It,"

but on "Radio," the first single

from forthcoming set "Stone

Rollin'," he returns to the pri-

ordial R&B of the pre-rock-

'n'roll era. The beach-borne

guitar and doo-wop backing

vocals simultaneously evoke

the classic sounds of Southern

California and Chicago. Saadiq

cleverly bridges the genera-

tional gap by choosing a lyrical

theme that works just as well

today as it would have 50

years ago. The singer person-

ifies radio as a wild femme fa-

tales who he can't turn away

ASHLYNE HUFF



ASHLYNE HUFF

White Flag (3:32)

Producer: Greg Ogan

Writers: E. Bellinger,

E. Bogart, A. Huff,

G. Ogan

Publishers: various

Liquid Digital Audio

After contributing a track to the

Pussycat Dolls' most recent

album and opening for Jordin

Sparks last summer, Los

Angeles singer/songwriter

Ashlyne Huff takes the spot-

light on her debut single, "White

Flag." With a playful persona

and charismatic voice, Huff

smartly keeps the stakes of

her introduction low by sur-



with light romantic musings. "I've

been hiding from the truth this

whole time/Picture perfect

hanging right in front of me,"

Huff sings in the second verse

before putting her "white flag

in the air" and surrendering to

her true love. Producer Greg

Ogan's crackling beat recalls

the synthesizer-laden drive of

Katy Perry's "California Gurls"

and takes off during a delight-

fully catchy bridge. "White

Flag" makes unadulterated fun

its top priority and gives Huff

a powerful opening statement

as a pop artist.—JL

"I Can't Love You Back" is a

beautifully crafted song about

a man who can't let go of a

failed romance. Corbin deliv-

ers an achingly vulnerable per-

formance and makes his emo-

tional pain palpable as he sings

about trying to rekindle the

flame in a relationship. Though

his debut hit drew vocal com-

parisons to George Strait, with

each successive single Corbin

proves that he can carve out

his own place in the country

spotlight.—DEP

POP

FAR*EAST MOVEMENT FEATURING RYAN TEDDER

Rocketeer (3:31)

Producers: Stereotypes, the

Smeezingtons

Writers: various

Publishers: various

Cherrytree/Interscope

Following breakout hit "Like a

G6," electronic pop group

Far*East Movement returns to

the Billboard Hot 100 with the

help of OneRepublic's Ryan

Tedder. "Rocketeer," the sec-

ond single off the act's latest

studio album, "Free Wired,"

flashes a nice melody but lacks

the uniqueness that made "G6"

a surprise chart-topper. The

song develops a more laid-

back groove than its rhythmic

predecessor, as Tedder sings

the soothing chorus and Kev

Nish tosses off lines like "Baby

we can stay fly like a G6/Shop

the streets of Tokyo, get you fly

kicks." In terms of production,

however, "Rocketeer" lacks di-

versity in its instrumentation

and feels somewhat tired by

the time of its conclusion. The

song rolls along on a nice com-

bination of pop elements, but

Far*East Movement should be

willing to take more chances

on future singles.—RG

LEGEND & CREDITS

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