Monica - New Life (2012)

01. New Life (Intro) 1:29 02. It All Belongs To Me (Feat. Brandy) 4:04 03. Daddys Good Girl 4:39 04. Man Who Has Everything 3:55 05. Big Mistake 3:49 06. Take A Chance (Feat. Wale) 3:44 07. Without You 4:09 08. Until Its Gone 3:44 09. Amazing 4:03 10. Cry 3:44 11. Time To Move On 4:29 12. New Life (Outro) 0:58

Two years after releasing her sixth studio album, Still Standing, and its accompanying hit reality TV show, singer Monica returned with 2012's New Life. Once again working with a bevy of producers from Still Standing, including Polow da Don, Missy Elliott, Bryan-Michael Cox, and others, Monica delivered a sophisticated and mature collection of contemporary R&B that found the onetime '90s teen superstar finally moving on from her former fiancé and father of her two sons, rapper Rocko (Rodney Hill Jr.), from whom she split in 2010. Here, Monica delves into the pitfalls of adult relationships gone bad where kids are involved and complex modern lives filled with houses, cars, clothes, and even Macbooks -- as Monica points out in "It All Belongs to Me," her reunion with '90s duet partner-in-crime Brandy -- must be sussed out. However, the strong survivor that Monica reveals herself to be here doesn't quibble with details and instead takes the approach that her man should simply pack his bags and get out, because "all that sh*t belongs to me." It’s just this kind of saucy, spirited, and soulful vibe that makes New Life such a refreshing and focused female soul album. Monica's voice is also in top form here, recalling both her '90s heyday and the burnished, swaggering approach of such icons as Mary J. Blige and Toni Braxton. This is especially true on such tracks as the pleading slow burn of "Daddy's Good Girl," the Elliott-produced single "Anything (To Find You)" (a bonus track on the Deluxe Edition), and the anthemic ballad "Until It's Gone." These are slick but straightforward productions that mix a deft synth and drum program studio vibe with a warm, overall earthy vibe. ---Matt Collar, Rovi

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