Gloria Estefan – The Very Best of (2006)

01. Dr. Beat 02. Rhythm Is Gonna Get You 03. Can't Stay Away From You 04. Hold Me, Thrill Me, Kiss Me 05. Heaven's What I Feel 06. Everlasting Love 07. Don't Wanna Lose You 08. You'll Be Mine 09. Get On Your Feet 10. Reach 11. Don't Let This Moment End 12. Anything For You 13. Bad Boy 14. 1-2-3 15. Oye Mi Canto 16. Coming Out Of The Dark 17. Wrapped 18. Turn The Beat Around 19. Conga 20. Doctor Pressure

As one of the biggest new stars to emerge during the mid-'80s, singer Gloria Estefan predated the coming Latin pop explosion by a decade, scoring a series of propulsive dance hits rooted in the rhythms of her native Cuba before shifting her focus to softer, more ballad-oriented fare. Born Gloria Fajardo in Havana on September 1, 1957, she was raised primarily in Miami, Florida, after her father, a bodyguard in the employ of Cuban president Fulgencio Batista, was forced to flee the island following the 1959 coup helmed by Fidel Castro. In the fall of 1975, Fajardo and her cousin Merci Murciano auditioned for the Miami Latin Boys, a local wedding band headed by keyboardist Emilio Estefan. With their addition, the group was rechristened Miami Sound Machine and four years later, Fajardo and Estefan were wed. As Miami Sound Machine began composing their own original material, their fusion of pop, disco, and salsa earned a devoted local following, and in 1979 the group issued their first Spanish-language LP on CBS International. Despite a growing Hispanic fan base, they did not cross over to non-Latin audiences until "Dr. Beat" topped European dance charts in 1984.

With 1985's Primitive Love, Miami Sound Machine recorded their first English-language effort, scoring three Top Ten pop hits in the U.S. alone with the infectious "Conga," "Bad Boy," and "Words Get in the Way." For 1988's triple-platinum Let It Loose, the group was billed as Gloria Estefan & Miami Sound Machine, reeling off four Top Ten hits -- "Rhythm Is Gonna Get You," "Can't Stay Away from You," the chart-topping "Anything for You," and "1-2-3." 1989's Cuts Both Ways was credited to Estefan alone and generated her second number one hit, "Don't Wanna Lose You"; however, while touring in support of the album, on March 20, 1990, her bus was struck by a tractor trailer. She suffered a broken vertebrae that required extensive surgery

and kept her off the road for over a year. Emilio Estefan and the couple's son were injured in the crash as well, but all three recovered. Estefan resurfaced in 1991 with Into the Light, again topping the charts with "Coming Out of the Dark," a single inspired by her near-fatal accident; two more cuts from the album, "Can't Forget You" and "Live for Loving You," secured her foothold on the adult contemporary charts.

With 1993's Mi Tierra, Estefan returned to her roots, recording her first Spanish-language record in close to a decade and earning a Grammy Award for Best Tropical Latin Album; on the follow-up, 1994's covers collection Hold Me Thrill Me Kiss Me, she also recalled her dance-pop origins with a rendition of the Vicki Sue Robinson disco classic "Turn the Beat Around." Another all-Spanish effort, Abriendo Puertas, earned the Grammy as well, while Destiny featured "Reach," named the official theme of the 1996 Summer Olympics. As Latin pop made new commercial headway thanks to the efforts of acts like Ricky Martin and Enrique Iglesias, Estefan reigned as the most successful crossover artist in Latin music history, with international record sales close to the 50 million mark. In 1999, she also made her feature film debut alongside Meryl Streep in Music of the Heart, recording the film's title song as a duet with *NSYNC and scoring both a massive pop hit and an Oscar nomination in the process.

A new Spanish-language album, Alma Caribeña, followed in the spring of 2000. Several months later, Estefan was awarded a Grammy for Best Music Video for "No Me Dehes de Querer" at the first annual Latin Grammy Awards. Her husband, Emilio, won for Producer of the Year. In 2003, she released Unwrapped, an English-language effort that met with a lukewarm reception from consumers and critics. She didn't return with another new album for several years, as stop-gap compilations such as Amor y Suerte: Exitos Romanticos (2004), The Essential Gloria Estefan (2006), and Oye Mi Canto: Los Éxitos (2006) were released from time to time. When she did return, with 90 Millas in 2007, it was with a splash. The Cuban-themed, Spanish-language effort hearkened back to Mi Tierra and was a big hit on the Latin music scene; its lead single, "No Llores," quickly scaled Billboard's Hot Latin Tracks chart, and the album itself was a chart-topper as well. Estefan returned to English-language pop with 2011's Miss Little Havana, a dance-pop album produced by Pharrell Williams of the Neptunes. Estefan went in the opposite direction for her next album, tackling the Great American Songbook on the aptly titled 2013 album The Standards.

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