

00:00:00	Music	Transition	“Crown Ones” off the album <i>Stepfather</i> by People Under The Stairs
00:00:05	Oliver Wang	Host	Hello, I’m Oliver Wang.
00:00:06	Morgan Rhodes	Host	And I’m Morgan Rhodes. You’re listening to <i>Heat Rocks</i> .
00:00:09	Oliver	Host	Every episode we invite a guest to talk to us about a heat rock, you know, an album that burns eternally, and today we are going to be donning matching fill jackets and baggy pants to new jack swing back to 1991 and the debut album by Jodeci, <i>Forever My Lady</i> .
00:00:26	Music	Music	<p>“Forever My Lady” off the album <i>Forever My Lady</i> by Jodeci. Mid-tempo, smooth R&B.</p> <p><i>So you're having my baby And it means so much to me There's nothing more precious Than to raise a family</i></p> <p><i>If there's any doubt...</i></p> <p><i>[Music fades out as Morgan speaks]</i></p>
00:00:45	Morgan	Host	<p>Don’t talk. Just listen.</p> <p><i>[Oliver grunts.]</i></p> <p>I gotta be honest with you, I lied. If you were waiting for me to drop some, oh, real insider intel about my life just then, my bad. What an intro that would have been to whatever I might have said, and what an intro those exact words made to the debut album from a pair of brothers, the DeGrates, and the two Haileys. The fantastic four from Hampton, Virginia, and Charlotte, North Carolina, respectively.</p> <p>The saying goes, it’s not how you start, it’s how you finish. But Jodeci was nice with the starts. They started as four dudes who drove across country with a 29 song, three tape demo. They started 1991 strong, releasing <i>Forever My Lady</i> in the spring of the year. They started the album with five buttery, whisper in your ear, make you reaffirm your commitment to monogamy, get up and make you spaghetti, tattoo your name on my neck type-Black love, until track six, in an interlude called “Nasty”. Then it all went different.</p>
00:01:45	Morgan	Host	<p>They were part of starting a real shift in R&B, from suits to boots, from slow dancing to slow whining. Bad boys before a bad boy left uptown to start Bad Boy. They were it. Church kids with baseball caps and vocals, whose sound had been crafted by an architect named DeVante Swing, and a visionary, Andre Harrell, who built his label into hip hop’s Motown.</p> <p>Thirteen songs, 57 minutes 32 seconds. That’s all it took for the band who blended gospel and new jack swing to charm us into their hearts and out of our garments. The album showed the dimension of their persona—wanting to love you for life, but also maybe just for tonight—and R&B’s two moods: a sort of “sometimes I rhyme slow,</p>

sometimes I rhyme quick” for the ballad fans, shout-out to Nice & Smooth.

The production and vocals of these four are the reason Doc Martens went urban for a minute, the reason my homegirl went crazy for a minute, the reason why I had a crush on K-Ci for a minute. The reason why Uptown ran everything for a minute, why their tenure in the game was hot for a minute, a hot minute. Hot for them, hot for yours truly, and hot for the fans. Let’s get into it. Stay. Don’t talk, just listen.

00:03:01 Music Music [*“Forever My Lady” fades back in*]

*... I mean
Forever and ever
I pray is what I see
Yes, my baby*

*Can you picture, my lady?
This empty...*

[Music fades out as Oliver speaks]

00:03:20 Oliver Host *Forever My Lady* was the album pick of our guest today: scholar and culture critic, Shana Redmond. She’s a professor of musicology at UCLA’s Herp Albert School of Music, where she studies and teaches on popular music, race, and politics. Her first book from 2014 was *Anthem: Social Movements and the Sound of Solidarity in the African Diaspora*, and she’s currently working on two new books.

One is *Everything Man*, about the life and legacy of singer, actor, and activist Paul Robeson. The other is about the phenomenon of Aid Music—think “We Are The World” and “Do They Know It’s Christmastime At All”—and that one’s entitled, *The Song That Saved The World*. I’m looking forward to both these tomes.

Shana, welcome to *Heat Rocks*.

00:04:02 Shana Guest Thank you so much.

00:04:04 Oliver Host Given that you are a pop music scholar, if I may say that, I was especially curious about what albums you might pick. I’ve seen you lead, for example, a panel discussion about Kendrick Lamar’s *To Pimp A Butterfly*, and I would certainly not have been surprised if you had gone with, let’s say, an album by Mahalia Jackson or Fela Kuti. But Jodeci and *Forever My Lady* I did not see coming, and I could not be more delighted that we’re gonna get into this. I need to know: what makes this album a heat rock for you?

00:04:33 Shana Guest There is just so much nostalgia attached to this album for me, and you know, upon revisiting it and actually putting myself in a material time and location, I’m a little bit ashamed actually to announce how invested I was in this album. Because, you know, I was a fresh, vivacious eleven year old when this album—

00:04:56 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Oliver and Morgan:** Wooow.

00:04:57 Shana Guest —came out, and it's wrong.

[Oliver laughs.]

It feels wrong that I should love this album in the way that I do, because I have all of these memories of it as being very much attached to, you know, certain types of sexualities and imaginations around my sexuality, around my relationship to my peers, and I was eleven years old. I mean, no shame, no shame.

00:05:24 Oliver Host Precocious.

00:05:25 Shana Guest Precocious, to say the least. I mean, to actually go back to the album in kind of a studied way, it's been a bit of an eye opening experience, to say the least.

But this album, you know, it still evokes so many deep emotions and it has some of those jams on it where, if you need to get in that mood, you know where to go.

00:05:52 Morgan Host Just where to go.

00:05:53 Shana Guest Just where to go. Which track to play, which two or three to ride out, and that's part of what I love about it, too. And I'm sure we'll get into that, but it's like the first five? Mm, I'm there for it.

00:06:06 Music Music "Stay" off the album *Forever My Lady* by Jodeci. Rhythmic speaking over smooth, jazzy R&B instrumentals to create new jack swing-style music.

*... stay
Just for tonight?
And maybe we can do something like
Make love, watch the sunrise
Or listen to JoJo, K-Ci sing us a verse*

[Music fades out as Oliver speaks]

00:06:25 Oliver Host We were talking about this before we taped, and I've said this on previous episodes. So, you know, I just have to cop to the fact that in the early 90s I had basically hip hop blinders on, which is to say that anything that wasn't in that lane with the exception of some 60s and 70s soul and funk thrown in, I just didn't really have much time for. And Jodeci was one of those groups that certainly like, I knew about because it was impossible to be listening to any kind of, you know, what was the term they used, genre term back then—urban contemporary radio stations. I was listening to a lot of K-MEL because I was in the Bay Area by then.

00:06:56 Morgan Host Shout-out.

00:06:57 Oliver Host And so yeah, stuff like *Forever My Lady*, "Come And Talk To Me" especially, and really the remix for it would get played on the mix shows. So I had cursory intersections with this album, but I never sat with this at all. In fact, I don't think I've—up until this past week, I don't think I've sat with any Jodeci album in its entirety. So, it was fun for me to revisit this era. I was a little bit older than eleven. I'm—

I'll use Morgan's line to say, won't say how old, but—

[Morgan and Oliver both laugh.]

—but it does remind me of just what the sound of R&B was like in the early 90s. And Jodeci—and we'll get into this, I'm sure—as kind of one of those acts that was part of the new jack swing era, and we've talked a lot about new jack swing on the show. There's some of it I could kind of get into and a lot of it which just, still to this day, as open minded as I try to be, it's just not my sound. It's something—I don't know what it is, this is no slight on Al B. Sure! or Babyface or all the architects of folks who put together this particular style. Teddy Riley.

It's an interesting time capsule, I'll say that much. How about you?

00:08:00	Morgan	Host	First of all, I have to say I think it was the warm up act for <i>What's The 411</i> ?
00:08:04	Oliver	Host	Oh, interesting.
00:08:05	Morgan	Host	I think it got us nice and ready for Uptown and what Uptown was bringing, and so my first impressions were, "Man, this is rugged, like, this is rugged R&B." And I hadn't seen them, any of the pictures of them, before I heard the jam. And so this got heavily rotated, and "Come And Talk To Me" was first, was the first thing I heard on the radio, was the first thing that was getting bumped.
			I didn't buy this album, but I heard it a lot, and for me it was love at first listen.
00:08:36	Oliver	Host	Yeah.
00:08:37	Shana	Guest	I think, too, there was something very gendered about it. You know, and I think that the kind of aesthetic practice of Jodeci, the boots, the baggy jeans, the baggy shorts that reach your ankles, the tight tank tops, etcetera, etcetera. I think that type of stuff was a welcome for men, perhaps, in certain types of ways, but R&B has always kind of appealed to women, perhaps first. Right, that's your first audience.
			And, you know, that becomes disrupted with Jodeci, but I do think there's something, to me, about having been drawn to it for that reason, right, because I'm supposed to be, right? That there's a certain pitch toward that type of listening audience, but also something for me about growing up in the Midwest, where hip hop was not as prominent in this moment, unless we were pulling from the coasts. Right? So we didn't have the Kanye's, the Common's, the Eminem's, the folks who were repping hard for the Midwest.
			So, unless we were getting into the Biggies and the stuff like that—which did happen, and I absolutely became a fan—this was really my lane, as far as popular music was concerned.
00:09:44	Oliver	Host	So how did this Jodeci album cross your path?
00:09:46	Shana	Guest	So, Jodeci I would have heard definitely on the radio, and then

purchased the CD as a part of one of those old subscription services.

- 00:09:59 Oliver Host Columbia House type.
- 00:10:00 Shana Guest Yeah, where you could get like 50 CDs for a dollar.
- 00:10:03 Oliver Host Exactly.
- 00:10:04 Shana Guest So that was part of that collection, but definitely got wore out far more than the other selections.
- 00:10:10 Morgan Host I wanted to quickly just shout-out a couple of the things that came out in 1991, since Oliver asked you what was going on in 1991, and some of the big album chart toppers were Michael Jackson—you mentioned Michael Jackson, “Black or White”; Shanice Wilson, “I Love Your Smile”; Pebbles, “Love Makes Things Happen”.
- 00:10:28 Music Music “Love Makes Things Happen” off the album *Always* by Pebbles. Soulful, romantic R&B.
- ... love makes things happen
You never know where it's coming from
(Where it's coming from)
You never know who you're gonna love
(Who you're gonna love, now!)*
- [Music fades out as Morgan speaks]*
- 00:10:42 Morgan Host Um, man, BeBe and CeCe Winan’s “Addictive Love”, Luther Vandross *Power of Love*, MC Hammer “Addams Groove”.
- 00:10:51 Shana Guest I can’t believe that’s on there.
- [Everyone laughs.]*
- 00:10:53 Music Music “Addams Groove” off the album *Too Legit to Quit* by MC Hammer. Mid-tempo rap with a strong, clapping drumbeat.
- But Wednesday, Pugsley, Gomez, Fester
Man, them some strange neighbors*
- They do what they wanna do, say what they wanna say
Live how they wanna live, play how they wanna play
Dance how they wanna dance, kick and they slap a friend
The Addams Family!*
- [Music fades out as Shana speaks]*
- 00:11:06 Shana Guest *[Rapping, as the song]* “Do what they wanna do, say what they wanna say, live how they wanna”—I know.
- 00:11:09 Morgan Host That was a jam, though. I’m not gonna shade. I’m not gonna shade Hammer. Um, Gerald Levert, *Private Time*; this was Prince, *Diamonds and Pearls*; Surface, “The First Time”; and of course, one of the biggest hits of the year was C+C Music Factory, “Gonna Make You Sweat”. Everybody dance now.

00:11:25	Oliver	Host	But I think to your previous point, you look at where Jodeci fits into that constellation of artists, and they don't quite fit into any of the boxes that some of those others might. And I really like that term you were using in terms of rugged R&B, because I think, until I really thought about it, I always just packaged Jodeci together with all of the other acts from that era. That goes as far back as like, late 80s New Edition to like, all the post-Jodeci acts that we can talk about. We've talked about Boyz II Men on this show, what have you. But it didn't really dawn on me today that they really marked a shift in sort of what, how R&B looked and how it sounded. You want to say more about that?
00:12:04	Morgan	Host	Well, I think for one, the one that we've joked about on this show is that pre-sort of hip hop R&B, no matter how old the singers were, they all looked 45. <i>[Shana and Oliver laugh and agree.]</i> It didn't matter how old they really were, they looked like your dad. And I think that was a part of marketing, that the urban contemporary was supposed to mean older urban contemporary. And post-this hip hop new jack swing era, everybody looked young. Super young. Freddie Jackson had that buttery lighting behind him, he had sort of like—
00:12:35	Shana	Guest	The finger wave.
00:12:36	Morgan	Host	—blue songs underneath his jacket, you know, little candelabra behind him. So you have someone like Jodeci come up, and you're like, yo, these dudes have on like, you know, K-Ci got his shirt open, the caps are backwards. So that was one of the shifts. I think tempo was another thing that had to do with it, although Jodeci was a band, they were a new type of band. And I think that was one of the changes, and like I was saying sort of in the intro, the way that we partied to R&B music was different. Like you could get really down and dirty in this time, and before that if you were doing all that twerking and stuff to Freddie Jackson, someone was gonna be like, "What's going on with you?"
00:13:18	Shana	Guest	No, it was not for that.
00:13:20	Morgan	Host	It was not for that.
00:13:21	Shana	gs	It was for candlelight—
00:13:22	Morgan	Host	That's it.
00:13:23	Shana	Guest	—and, you know, sweet dinners.
00:13:24	Morgan	Host	Right. Luther was not for—you weren't moving too fast to Luther. And so I think that represented the shift, and I think this type of R&B had to walk in the door with hip hop, because hip hop gave it the permission to be rough neck and to be a little bit lugged out and to be that secret, that secret boyfriend that you brought home that, you know, and that's what sort of this album felt like to me. When you start off a song, you know, "So you're having my baby, and it means so much to me," um, the assumption is that they weren't married.

00:13:57	Shana	Guest	Yeah, absolutely.
00:13:58	Morgan	Host	But that was a shift in sort of the morals that you could talk about and be like, swinging together. And I think the genius of Uptown is they capitalized on “look at that family.” You got Christopher Williams, you got—I think Father MC was on there, you got Mary, Heavy D. They came out the gates swinging, selling this sound, and Jodeci walked right in.
00:14:23	Music	Music	<p>“Come and Talk to Me” off the album <i>Forever My Lady</i> by Jodeci. New jack swing with soulful vocals over an up-tempo drumbeat.</p> <p><i>There you are again With the same smile each day I wanna know what it is That makes me feel this way I wish I could grab you Tell you what it means to me To see you walking by my way</i></p> <p><i>[Music fades out as Morgan speaks]</i></p>
00:14:44	Morgan	Host	I saw Jodeci’s first interview with Donnie Simpson and Donnie Simpson probably wasn’t that old, but sitting with them and talking to them, he seemed like an older dude.
00:15:00	Clip	Clip	<p>Donnie Simpson: And look, you do look and say, “oh, they’re rappers,” you know. But I’m told that y’all can sing, man, that if I ask you to sing something right now, man, it would be like—</p> <p>K-Ci Hailey: You want it?</p> <p>Donnie: Yeah, definitely!</p> <p><i>[Jodeci mutters between each other for a moment.]</i></p> <p>Mr. Dalvin: <i>[Singing]</i> <i>Forever my lady</i></p> <p>K-Ci, Mr. Dalvin, DeVanté Swing, and JoJo Hailey: <i>[Singing, harmonizing]</i> <i>Will want for me Holding me close, yeah She’s all I need When we make love It’s like a...</i></p> <p><i>[The clip fades out as Morgan speaks]</i></p>
00:15:36	Morgan	Host	So, I mean, they came out the gate swinging, they could really sing, but you have to see it, because Donnie Simpson, it is like your uncle being like, “Is that what they’re doing now? That’s those new dances?”
00:15:46	Oliver	Host	He’s just seeing the writing on the wall, realizing that his time is about to be up.

00:15:50 Morgan Host Absolutely, and that that sort of music had changed. He wasn't hating it, he seemed very, very enamored of them, but it was a sort of a changing of the guard happening right in front of your eyes.

00:16:01 Shana Guest Absolutely.

00:16:02 Oliver Host We mentioned earlier the role of Andre Harrell—who's running Uptown, and absolutely deserves so much credit for engineering this whole movement—but let's not also forget the person, the young intern at Uptown who was assigned to work with Jodeci as their A&R, young Sean "Puffy" Combs. And a lot of the image, a lot of the styling that went in, the visual component's what I mean, that was a lot of Puffy's innovations, and you can certainly see how you get from that moment in 91 with what Puffy would do with Bad Boy for the rest of the decade, and the DNA is all kind of planted in right here.

00:16:37 Morgan Host Absolutely. Absolutely, and I mean, there are so many stories about him, you know, getting on a bus, leaving Howard University and going to work, and then you know, doing these great parties; but to your part, he was sort of creating an empire before we even get to Bad Boy in '93. He's already sort of laying the foundation, and he moved right from this sort of hip hop soul, right into ghetto fabulous, and he never looked back, so shout-out to interns.

00:17:07 Shana Guest Absolutely. Don't sleep on them.

00:17:09 Morgan Host Don't sleep on interns, paid or not. Shout-out to—I need an intern.

00:17:13 Shana Guest I mean, he's, you know, he's brilliant in many ways, as we know, but he's also a very crafty mimic, so he develops 112 after having worked with Jodeci.

00:17:25 Music Music "Cupid" off the album *112* by 112. Impassioned R&B.

*No, no, no, no, no
Cupid doesn't lie
But you won't know unless you give it a try
True love won't lie
But you...*

[Music fades out as Shana speaks]

00:17:44 Shana Guest And 112 becomes kind of a hybrid of the older, suited up R&B and this new kind of rough neck, bootied type of R&B, because they're kind of doing both at one point. But he had tremendous success with them just a few short years after working with Jodeci, and they have to have to have played a huge, huge role in the way that he was working that group.

00:18:07 Oliver Host And I did not realize this until now, but one of my favorite things from the 90s and, and as a DJ I used to play this a lot, was Puffy's remix of Faith Evans' "You Used To Love Me" from 1996.

[Morgan makes "ooh" sound in the background.]

And again, I just didn't think about it until this past week. He's basically just redoing his own remix of "Come And Talk To Me" from

'91. So, Christian, can you drop the “Come And Talk To Me” remix first?

00:18:31 Music Music “Come And Talk To Me (Remix)” off the album *Forever My Lady* by Jodeci.

*I've been watching you, for so very long
Trying to get my nerve built up to be so strong
[Music switches to a more hip-hop beat. A piano flourishes and a high voice sings while a second low voice repeats “remix, remix” in the background]*

I remember the way you used to love me

[Music fades out as Oliver speaks]

00:18:55 Oliver Host So he has—

00:18:56 Morgan Host Sounds like EPMD, though.

00:18:57 Oliver Host That too. Right, but I just feel like that he’s really bringing it all the way back. I mean, it’s only been five years, it’s not, like, a huge amount of time. But to your point, Shana, about just Puffy being an expert mimicker, like he’s great at mimicking himself. It’s really—it was just revelatory to realize how much he had already been percolating with a lot of these ideas, just as this early, again, as a random intern, still going to college at the time.

00:19:24 Morgan Host 18-19 years old. Yeah, and speaking of that, at the time Jodeci got together, these guys are also 18-19-20 years old, new in the game, you know, church kids, and they built this empire. When you look at that clip, you can tell that they’re really young.

I was gonna get into this later, but since we’re here, let’s talk a little bit about the vocals. Let’s talk about the difference between K-Ci and JoJo. We talked a lot about this as I was listening to it, everyone chose a side. Everyone had a favorite. And some people thought, you know, you can’t see them separately, it has to be them two, I don’t know. I felt a little bit like JoJo was like, half and half, and K-Ci was like flavored creamer. One was just a little bit sweeter than the other.

How did you feel about their vocals?

00:20:24 Shana Guest Yeah, I mean—

00:20:25 Morgan Host Did you also—did you feel like they were pitchy sometimes?

00:20:28 Shana Guest Yes. Absolutely.

00:20:29 Morgan Host Okay, ‘cause confession’s good for the soul in here, and I wanted to be able to say that around the supportive community.

00:20:34 Shana Guest Yes, absolutely. I saw one of the reviews of the album when it first came out, you know, it was, “The production was great, but the vocals, hmm.”

00:20:45 Morgan Host Really?

00:20:46 Shana Guest You know, someone in the *Times*, the *LA Times*, was like, “Mmm, not so much. But the production, thumbs up.” Um, absolutely they were pitchy, absolutely. And I think they continued to be, right, when K-Ci and JoJo broke off, it continued to be kind of a part of their sound, and I think in some ways it worked for me because there was definitely that very clear distinction between the two voices. So you have that variation that’s already working to keep the ear kind of bouncing back and forth, but then it was also I just appreciated the showmanship of a K-Ci.

You know, it was very clear to me that they had grown up in the church. And learning it was a Pentecostal church, you know, that they were used to certain types of call and response traditions that manifested those kind of key signature, [*singing*] ooh, yeah. You know, like those moments in the song.

And so I could deal with the pitchiness, because he played with the others in ways that I thought was both really brilliant, also really greedy. You know, like he never wanted to step away from the mic. So, whether he was just repeating what you said, or he had actually taken his own line, he was always in the mic. There was, you know, something about that insistence, that confidence, that even with the pitchiness totally worked for me.

00:22:06 Music Music “It’s Alright” off the album *Forever My Lady* by Jodeci. Fast-paced new jack swing with a hip hop beat.

*Said I saw you last night looking hard as you can
Tryna turn your head but I put you in a trance
You might as well tell me that you wanna roll with me
All the ladies...*

[Music fades out as Morgan speaks]

00:22:21 Morgan Host We’ll be back with more of our conversation with Shana Redmond on Jodeci’s 1991 *Forever My Lady* after a brief word from a couple great MaxFun podcasts. Don’t go anywhere.

00:22:32 Music Transition “Crown Ones” off the album *Stepfather* by People Under The Stairs

00:22:35 Promo Promo **Music:** Fun, jaunty, upbeat music.

Renee Colvert: Hi! I’m Renee Colvert.

Alexis Preston: I’m Alexis Preston!

Renee: And we’re the hosts of the smash hit podcast *Can I Pet Your Dog?* Now, Alexis.

Alexis: Yes.

Renee: We got big news.

Alexis: Uh-oh!

Renee: Since last we did a promo, our dogs have become famous.

Alexis: World-famous!

Renee: World—like, stars on the Hollywood Walk of Fame! Second big news.

Alexis: Mm-hm?

Renee: The reviews are in.

Alexis: Mm-hm?

Renee: Take yourself to Apple Podcasts, you know what you're gonna hear? We're happy!

Alexis: It's true!

Renee: We're a delight! A great distraction from the world!

Alexis: I like that part a lot.

Renee: So if that's what you guys are looking for...

Alexis: Mm-hm.

Renee: You gotta check out our show! But what else can they expect?

Alexis: We've got dog tech, dog news, celebrities with their dogs. All dog things!

Renee: All the dog things. So if that interests you, well, get yourself on over to [Maximum Fun](#) every Tuesday!

[Music ends.]

00:23:16 Promo Promo

Music: Warm instrumental rendition of “Jingle Bells”; by James Lord Pierpont.

Speaker: Have you been to [MaxFunStore.com](#) lately? Because we've just launched a ton of new merch for a bunch of your favorite shows! You want a patch? We've got it! Tote? Mug? Stickers? We got those, too! Heck, we've even got a onesie for your favorite baby.

[A baby laughs.]

Now is the time to start holiday shopping for the MaxFun fans in your life! Including yourself. That's [MaxFunStore.com](#).

[Music ends.]

00:23:47 Music Transition

“Crown Ones” off the album *Stepfather* by People Under The Stairs

00:23:50 Oliver Host

We are back on *Heat Rocks* talking about the debut album by Jodeci from 1991, *Forever My Lady*, with professor Shana Redmond.

00:23:59	Morgan	Host	So, a question that comes up on this show a lot is: was the album, for you, love at first listen, to the degree that you listened from front to back? Or did you get stuck on any individual tracks?
00:24:12	Shana	Guest	I did, um, I think initially listen from front to back, just out of curiosity, but my returns to the album have not been front to back, probably ever since. I really get stuck in the first five songs, and you know, coincidentally, those were the ones that had the most air play, those were the singles. But I think there's also something else, that this is almost like two different albums to me at that split, you know, because the second half of the album feels very much to me like they're trying too hard. It's taking new jack swing to like, too close to the hip hop end and not doing it successfully. And so I wanted to stay closer to the old R&B end. It's still pushing on all the right edges and boundaries, but the first half to me just feels a little bit more, um—not authentic, but a little bit more kind of secure. That the footing is more secure, and the types of kind of worlds that they're introducing through the production just seem to me more voluminous than the latter ones. The latter ones feel more formulaic, and like they're out of their element.
00:25:25	Morgan	Host	It surprised me—that's a good point—it surprised me when I was looking at some of the personnel, because the second half, if I'd have closed my eyes, I would have been like, "Well, the whole second half had to be produced by Teddy Riley," because that's what it sounds like. Everything is "Rump Shaker" with a few verses about being together.
00:25:41	Shana	Guest	Which I loved, by the way.
00:25:42	Morgan	Host	Yeah, loved it too, but how old were you when "Rump Shaker" came out?
00:25:45	Shana	Guest	Oh, gosh. When was that?
00:25:48	Oliver	Host	That was like, around '92 or '90. Same era. Same era.
00:25:52	Shana	Guest	Yeah, so, 12-13ish.
00:25:54	Morgan	Host	Man, listening to a lot. No judgment here though.
00:25:56	Shana	Guest	Yeah, you know, I used my paper route money and I snuck off to the record store—
00:26:00	Oliver	Host	Good for you.
00:26:01	Shana	Guest	—without my parents, so.
00:26:02	Morgan	Host	Yeah, the second half was a complete change. I mean, like I said from the moment they did that interlude—and shout-out to interludes because I do love them—but from the moment they did that, the game had changed.
00:26:13	Music	Music	"Interlude (553 - Nasty)" off the album <i>Forever My Lady</i> by Jodeci. Straight talking with no music.

*K-CI:
Jodeci is in the house!*

*SPEAKER 1:
What up, Dal?*

*MR. DALVIN:
Yo, what's up man?*

*JOJO:
All these fly honeys out here...*

*SPEAKER 1:
On the strip!*

*SPEAKER 2:
Dalvin!*

*SPEAKER 3:
Yo, where DeVante, man?*

*MR. DALVIN:
Yo, I don't know. He's somewhere kicking it, you know?*

*SPEAKER 4:
Yo, what's up with the flow?*

*JOJO:
Later for all that, man, I'm gonna call my girl...*

[Sound of a number being dialed on a payphone.]

*JOJO:
Ahh, hope you home, baby. C'mon baby... please be there!*

*K-CI:
Yo, hurry up!*

[Song ends.]

00:26:38	Morgan	Host	And I <u>still</u> wonder which was the real Jodeci.
00:26:41	Oliver	Host	Well, big difference here though, is because those first songs through the “Interlude”, and then “My Phone”, track number seven, those are all co-produced with Al B. Sure! But the back half of the album, this goes to Shana’s point, that’s just DeVante Swing. He has sole producer credits. So it might be that Al B. Sure!’s influence—and of course, I mean, he was already a giant at this point, in terms of Al B. Sure! I’m saying—so I think losing that probably explains at least some of the shift in the sound in that back half of the album.
00:27:10	Shana	Guest	Absolutely.
00:27:11	Oliver	Host	I wanted to briefly also, since we just brought him up, just touch on

DeVante Swing's legacy. Because this is someone who I had never—I had never really thought of the name, because K-Ci and JoJo were the main folks in the group that would have a sustained career. And obviously Jodeci has reformed over the years and whatnot, but besides Jodeci, DeVante Swing—via his swing mob—discovered Missy, Timbaland, and Ginuwine.

00:27:33 Morgan Host

And Magoo.

00:27:34 Oliver Host

Okay, fine. Magoo too, but—

[Morgan laughs.]

Mostly Missy and Timbaland. And I just feel like he—it's not necessarily that he's been written out of that history, it's just we don't remember it because his career did not go in the direction that we, that I'm sure maybe perhaps he would have preferred, but I mean, this guy had clearly an ear for talent, in terms of everything he touched in the 90s.

00:27:57 Morgan Host

And I think they all, if I understand the story correct, they all sort of lived in this one house together, and all of those people that you mentioned were sort of in the basement cooking up all this stuff, and it wasn't until they broke out that they became mega stars.

And obviously Missy, Missy doesn't show up here, but on *Diary of a Mad Band* she's all over that, and that's the first time I sort of heard of Missy and what she could do as a producer. I was like, oh man, and supposedly she's uncredited on a lot of their early stuff, but she was a part of that too.

But he had a nice little soup of producers and—

00:28:36 Oliver Host

Incredible.

00:28:37 Shana Guest

And also thinking about him having, even prior to Jodeci, trying to make inroads with Prince.

[Oliver and Morgan both agree.]

Right, so he, like you said, he clearly has this ear, he's tuned into the world in ways that are both about what currently exist but what might be, and he's trying to generate kind of linkages and genealogies of his own that I think are really tremendous.

00:29:00 Oliver Host

Yeah. If I can just share, Shana, part of what you're talking about is, the story goes is that he drove—I guess—he was either—was he from North Carolina or—

00:29:11 Morgan Host

Virginia.

00:29:12 Oliver Host

He was from Virginia, right. That actually—that would make sense, with the Virginia Beach crowd. He drove to Minneapolis, to Paisley Park, and tried to get his demo tape to Prince multiple days in a row, and when that just utterly failed, he got back in his car and then drove back and supposedly this is sort of how Jodeci was born, out of his disappointment. That's when he approached Uptown,

because he couldn't get traction with His Purpleness, so he went with Uptown instead.

I mean, I'm trying to imagine, like imagine if Prince had bothered to like, give him the time of day. Like, how different things could have gone, it's—I'm not sure what that would have sounded like, but I'm open for it, you know?

00:29:47 Morgan Host And why Prince? Was he just a fan, or was, you know, what would the sound have been if they had connected?

00:29:54 Oliver Host Right, especially early 90s Prince.

00:29:56 Morgan Host Early 90s, yeah.

00:29:57 Oliver Host Yeah, because we're not talking about The Revolution at this point. This is *Diamonds and Pearls* Prince, to your point earlier, yeah.

I feel like we've already touched on this but I'm just gonna throw it out there. Is—you know, for an album that is now, what, 28 years old—what's aged better: the dance tracks, or the ballads?

Not that it has to be an either or, but I mean, you were saying, Shana, earlier that you feel like the back half—which is much more of the dance stuff—just doesn't really do it for you.

00:30:22 Shana Guest It doesn't do it for me. And I don't hear it in circulation. I mean, like you said, the remixes have been pretty fantastic and pretty prominent, but most of what I've encountered have still been the remixes of the ballads. So, I just don't think that—I think they were too time specific, they just don't have the longevity.

00:30:42 Oliver Host New jack swing didn't age well.

00:30:44 Shana Guest True.

00:30:45 Oliver Host This is not a—I don't feel like this is a controversial statement. I don't really know why—people can't see me, but I'm saying it like it's some hot take, but really I think everyone can kind of agree, new jack swing didn't age well.

00:30:54 Shana Guest You're throwing down now.

00:30:55 Morgan Host You're right. You're right. Let's get into the tracks though.

00:30:58 Oliver Host Yeah, let's go for it.

00:30:59 Morgan Host I'm gonna go first, because sometimes I'm self-absorbed, and I have to say that "Stay" is actually my favorite. Not the first one that I heard, but I love "Stay".

00:31:12 Music Music "Stay" off the album *Forever My Lady* by Jodeci.

Let's try again to put our trust on the line

*Tonight, let's start our love again
(Why don't we start our love again?)
Tonight, we can be more...*

[Music fades out as Morgan speaks]

- 00:31:30 Morgan Host Something about that beat, something about the fact that I felt like—and I just said that I didn't know if Mr. Dalvin was singing or anything—but this was one of those songs where I thought, like, everybody's singing on here. I thought it was charming, and I like the vocals. This was a non-pitchy Jodeci on this track. And what I do miss about the 90s is I do miss brothers talking at the beginning and in the middle of the songs, like stopping to say whatever their thoughts are; so for what it's worth, I want people to bring back interludes and just talking to start a track. Intros and interludes is my thing. But this was my favorite, much more than "Come And Talk To Me", which I loved, but there was something so sweet about "Stay."
- 00:32:16 Shana Guest Yeah, I think it has a really nice bop to it, too. You can just kind of twostep if you're of that ilk.
- 00:32:22 Oliver Host And it's interesting listening to how open and airy it is. The drum programming is pretty minimal. I feel like that same song today, there'd just be a lot more going on. Partly the influence of trap and the influence of bounce music. You would just hear a lot more hi hats and sixteenth notes, and this is, that was just, *[Beatboxing]* boom-ch, and then a little flavor sprinkled in there, but yeah, they get that—
- 00:32:44 Morgan Host That's it. Very simple.
- 00:32:45 Oliver Host —really, really clean.
- 00:32:48 Morgan Host Your favorite?
- 00:32:50 Shana Guest Oh gosh. My favorite. I don't know, I love those windchimes that starts "Forever My Lady". I mean, that opening is killer. I mean, returning to the album for the conversation, "U and I" stuck out to me, you know, that was the song I was still so proud of myself for knowing all the words to, and I think it, you know, it too is sweet, right? But it felt to me like that there is a little bit more of a stretch on the vocals at certain points for them, when they were singing together, and I think it maybe opened them up in a different type of way. And I'm always interested in the songs that knock but don't become singles. So, I'm usually—I usually gravitate towards those.
- 00:33:39 Morgan Host So, "U and I".
- 00:33:40 Shana Guest "U and I".
- 00:33:41 Music Music "U and I" off the album *Forever My Lady* by Jodeci. A soulful, impassioned R&B ballad.

*You and I could be one after all
Our love could be so strong
(Do you know what I'm talking about, baby?)
You and I would never stop*

[Music fades out as Oliver speaks]

- 00:34:01 Oliver Host I can just picture like, my college—I was gonna say ballroom. That

wasn't where we were dancing, but it—just a college dance, and the lighting is just a particular hue, and this would be playing, and you'd have people kind of standing on the walls, trying to like, get enough courage to cut a step to who they want to dance to, and this is the exact kind of song to be playing during that.

00:34:23	Morgan	Host	This is it. This is it.
00:34:24	Shana	Guest	And that moment where the gaze catches from opposite walls, you know, “U and I”, of course. Yeah. It’s that type of movie moment.
00:34:33	Oliver	Host	<i>[Morgan agrees emphatically several times as Oliver speaks.]</i> Well, I think I’m well-established for being the most basic. Any time we have—whether it’s between me and Morgan or with a guest—I always just pick the really obvious one. So my fire track is “Come And Talk To Me”, because it’s the one song that I still—that I would have heard back then that I still like writing to. And while I do prefer the remix version that we heard a taste from earlier—because you put “Impeach the President” drums on anything and I’m with it—but even the album cut, there is just that groove that we’ve been talking about. And it’s a really good hook, you know? <i>[Singing under his breath]</i> Come and talk to me. <i>[Speaking]</i> Like, it just—it’s a good ear worm.
00:35:07	Music	Music	“Come And Talk To Me” off the album <i>Forever My Lady</i> by Jodeci. <i>... you wanna tell me your name? (Wanna tell me your name) Let me play your game (Let me play your game) I wanna know, you wanna tell me your name? Let me play your game</i> <i>[Music fades out as Oliver speaks]</i>
00:35:25	Oliver	Host	And it does have that really beefy baseline, which does a lot of work on here.
00:35:30	Morgan	Host	Yeah, but you mentioned the remix earlier, and the remix was fire on that too.
00:35:32	Shana	Guest	So good.
00:35:3	Morgan	Host	Had a lot of good, good remixes of their songs. I used to like this remix of “Feenin”. I liked “Feenin”, like the song, I just like to say it. “Feenin”. I like saying the word. <i>[Shana and Oliver laugh.]</i> But I liked their remix that featured Erick Sermon, ‘cause I was a big EPMD, and I think we have it. Christian, if you could play it.
00:35:53	Music	Music	“Feenin (Remix) by Jodeci feat. Erick Sermon <i>[Singing]</i>

*You know you got me strung out
And I need you more
And more
'Cause you are my joy*

*[Rapping]
Yo, get back, scally-whack, give a dog a bone
I feen for you like I feen for the microphone
You got me doing backflips and crazed physics
What is it? It's something rough enough to start a blizzard*

[Music fades out as Oliver laughs and Morgan speaks]

00:36:18	Morgan	Host	<i>[Oliver laughs.]</i> Sorta dated?
00:36:20	Oliver	Host	Yeah, at '94? '95?
00:36:21	Morgan	Host	Uh, yeah, '94, yeah. Little bit old school. At the time it was bumping, though.
00:36:27	Oliver	Host	Yeah, no, no, no doubt, no doubt.
00:36:29	Shana	Guest	But it's always the period specific slang, you know, songs that are like, "Mm, I love that production, but do I really wanna be singing all the words with you right now? I don't know."
00:36:41	Morgan	Host	You wanna say "Feenin"? I'm gonna say "Feenin" for the rest of my life.
00:36:44	Oliver	Host	What I want to know is what do the two of you think of the album's closer, which is a song I'd never heard until this past week, and it's "Cherish", which is their cover of The Association's 1966 hit.
00:36:58	Music	Music	"Cherish" by The Association. Mild, mid-tempo, old-school pop/rock n' roll.

*That I am not gonna be the one
To share your dreams
That I am not gonna be the one
To share your schemes
That I am not gonna be the one to share what
Seems to be the life that you could
Cherish as much as I do yours*

[Music fades out as Oliver speaks]

00:37:15	Oliver	Host	And now let's hear Jodeci's.
00:37:17	Music	Music	"Cherish" off the album <i>Forever My Lady</i> by Jodeci. A much more upbeat version, with a hip hop backing and R&B vocals. Under the main vocal track repeating "cherish, cherish," one of the singers vocalizes both wordlessly and with the word "baby".

*... oh, baby
Cherish, cherish
Cherish, cherish*

*Cherish, cherish
Cherish...*

[Music fades out as Oliver speaks]

- 00:37:33 Oliver Host Was not anticipating this. I just thought it was gonna be a gospel track, and it took me probably a good one full minute into it to realize, “Wait, wait, is this a cover song of The Association?” And I was reading a couple reviews of the album at the time that were not kind to this. They did not—a lot of people did not think this was a good closer for the album, because it seemed to stand out as a sore thumb for them. But for me, and, you know—look, it’s well established I love a good cover song. And the whole take here, it doesn’t really sound like the rest of the album, which is I think why people didn’t like it, but I love—I just love the idea that they wanted to do “Cherish” of all songs in this style in ‘91.
- 00:38:11 Morgan Host And I wonder whose idea was that? Like, who was like, “You know, I’ve always loved The Association—”
- 00:38:16 Oliver Host Puffy. *[Everyone laughs.]*
- 00:38:18 Morgan Host But it—the song comes at the end of the album, but after another one of my favorite songs on here, which is “X’s We Share”.
- 00:38:24 Music Music “X’s We Share” off the album *Forever My Lady* by Jodeci. Loving, up-tempo new jack swing.
- ... we watched for the sun
We laughed and played, then morning comes
Just like the day we started our hearts
It was sunrise when we made our first love
The times...*
- [Music fades out as Shana speaks]*
- 00:38:41 Shana Guest It sounds like something, you know, that’s playing in the background in *Boomerang* or something.
- 00:38:46 Morgan Host Absolutely.
- 00:38:47 Shana Guest Which I—
- 00:38:48 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Morgan:** One of the best soundtracks ever.
Shana: One of my favorite movies, and soundtracks.
- 00:38:50 Shana Guest I teach that soundtrack, it’s so dope.
- 00:38:52 Morgan Host Fantastic.
- 00:38:53 Shana Guest So that’s not a knock, but it is that period, that moment. I mean, I think that the “Cherish” cover is really interesting, I mean, considering how much production control they had over the album. I mean, a tremendous amount as a new band. You have to believe it was deliberate, so I’m curious too, who decided on that?
- 00:39:09 Morgan Host Whose idea?

00:39:10 Shana Guest I mean, you know, I don't love it. I think, you know, it sounds like a bad barbeque jam.

[Oliver and Morgan laugh.]

But I appreciate the effort, you know, they're trying to do some different types of things, and they were curious. I like that.

00:39:29 Oliver Host I mean, maybe it was an attempt to appeal to an older generation, given how youthful everything else was. Though, again, why you would pick The Association of all bands, I don't know. But again, I'm not mad at it, so yeah.

00:39:40 Morgan Host If you, um, if you were teaching a class on Jodeci, and you had to name it after one of the songs on this album, what would you call it?

00:39:47 Oliver Host Love that. Love that.

00:39:48 Shana Guest Oh, yes. One of the songs on this album.

00:39:52 Oliver Host "Come And Talk To Me, But Read The Syllabus First."

[Morgan laughs.]

00:39:54 Shana Guest Yes, exactly! And then read it again! I think that's right. Yeah.

00:40:00 Morgan Host You know, I asked this of a couple of friends of mine that have younger nieces and nephews, like how would we explain, you know, like 90s R&B? Because a lot of the time kids are like, "90s R&B is coming back," but they mean a specific 90s R&B. They mean later 90s R&B, not this R&B. How would you explain this time with R&B to this generation?

00:40:23 Shana Guest I mean, I think most fundamentally that this was the era of R&B produced by the children of hip hop. That the people who were thinking about and creating this sound already had hip hop in their headphones, and so this is now the merger that we're hearing here. And they were also—because of hip hop, but also because of, you know, being post-war on drugs, post-Reagan—responding in material ways to the world in which they lived. It was not just going to be about lofty, benign ideas of love. It was going to be about more kinds of, um, you know, material exchanges that people were having with each other. And so, again, that's the influence of hip hop, that's also just being Black in this moment. Um, so, I think it begs then, for us to actually listen more, and to study more this moment, because I do think it's a pretty stark departure.

00:41:19 Morgan Host Absolutely.

00:41:20 Oliver Host I'm wondering, as someone who is, like myself, perpetually around people in their late teens and early 20s by the nature of our profession, do your students listen to this at all, and if so, what do they think of it?

00:41:32 Shana Guest They don't listen to it by choice, as far as I know.

[Oliver and Morgan laugh.]

00:41:36 Oliver Host This is the extra credit assignment right here.

00:41:39 Shana Guest Yes, or, you know, the lecture. So last year I taught a course on rhythm and blues, and I did it with a rough chronology, so I came through this moment, right? Like what you call R&B has a history, a history that was also in existence at the very moment you were being born, right? So let's think about that moment, The Rebellion in '92, let's listen to what's happening at this moment.

And so, you know, I do get a lot of blank faces during the lecture, but there are connections that I'm able to build for them. And you know, certainly those folks who have stood the test of time, you know, they still are interested in clapping it up for a Toni Braxton, thinking about divas and how so many of them are coming out of this moment, your Mariah Careys, blah blah blah.

But as far as, you know, thinking through longer genealogies of boy bands, I don't think this moment really sticks for them. New Edition, maybe. And then on the other side of it certainly are Boyz II Men, but the Jodecis, you know, the H-Towns, stuff like Hi-Five, they don't really land in the same way. And all three of those are different, in different ways.

00:42:47 Morgan Host Silks.

00:42:48 Shana Guest But um—Silks—you know, I don't think they're ready for Silk.

[Oliver laughs.]

00:42:52 Morgan Host No. Yo, were you listening to Silk as a youth?

00:42:55 Shana Guest I was listening to Silk.

00:42:56 Morgan Host Man.

00:42:57 Oliver Host Precocious.

00:42:58 Shana Guest Only in my bedroom.

00:43:00 Oliver Host Shana, if you had to describe *Forever My Lady* in three words, what three words would you choose?

00:43:07 Shana Guest Hard, close, responsive.

00:43:13 Music Music
 "Forever My Lady" off the album *Forever My Lady* by Jodeci.
You and I
Will never fall apart, no, no
You and I
I say we made it
And I say we made it from the start
The day we fell...

[Music fades out as Morgan speaks]

00:43:34 Morgan Host Thank you so much for picking this album and for bringing me back to 1991. And again—whether you know how old I really am or not—thank you for bringing me back to that time. Um, thank you for picking this album. If folks want to stay in touch with you, where can

they find you?

00:43:51 Shana Guest Um, I have a very long UCLA email address. You can find me online, or Twitter, @ShanaRedmond.

00:44:00 Oliver Host Don't you have your own URL?

00:44:02 Shana Guest I do, I do. DrShanaRedmond.com. It's not particularly up to date, but you can, you know, get at me there as well.

00:44:10 Morgan Host There it is.

00:44:11 Oliver Host And besides the two books you're working on, when is the first of those gonna be done? Or, I dunno if I should even ask that.

00:44:17 Shana Guest Yes, *Everything Man* is out in January.

00:44:19 Oliver Host Wow, fantastic.

00:44:20 Shana Guest Yup, very excited.

00:44:22 Oliver Host You've been listening to *Heat Rocks* with me, Oliver Wang, and Morgan Rhodes.

00:44:26 Morgan Host Our theme music is "Crown Ones" by *Thes One of People Under The Stairs*. Shoutout to Thes for the hookup.

00:44:32 Oliver Host *Heat Rocks* is produced by myself and Morgan, alongside Christian Dueñas who also edits, engineers, and does the booking for our shows.

00:44:39 Morgan Host Our senior producer is Laura Swisher and our executive producer is Jesse Thorn.

00:44:43 Oliver Host We are part of the Maximum Fun family, taping every week live in their studio in the west lake neighborhood of Los Angeles.

00:44:50 Christian Dueñas Producer Hey guys, it's producer Christian here, just wanted to quickly jump in with a tease for next week's episode. *Boyz II Men's II* turned 25 this year, so we're gonna be re-running our Phil Yu episode where we discuss that album.

00:45:04 Phil Yu Guest When "Motownphilly" dropped, that video, I did catch glimpses of that video, you know, despite not having MTV and I remember being so, like—I got, I was impressed with their style, because they had a different kind of style.

00:45:17 Morgan Host They did. They did.

00:45:18 Phil Guest And then, as somebody who didn't have a lot of style I think back then, but I was like, they were so like, they were really preppy, all "gapped" out, you know, and I was like, "That is my natural state!"

[*Oliver laughs.*]

I was like, "They are making this cool!" You know, and so that to me was like, I could get with this, you know, and so visually they made an impression on me, you know, in addition to being just like, a really hot single.

00:45:46	Speaker 1	Promo	MaximumFun.org .
00:45:47	Speaker 2	Promo	Comedy and culture.
00:45:49	Speaker 3	Promo	Artist owned—
00:45:50	Speaker 4	Promo	—Audience supported.