

Rihanna - Good Girl Gone Bad (2007)

Written by bluelover

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01 Umbrella 02 Push up on me 03 Dont stop the music 04 Breakin dishes 05 Shut up and drive 06 Hate that i love you 07 Say it 08 Sell me candy 09 lemme get that 10 Rehab 11 Question existing 12 Good girl gone bad 13 Cry

When you've released a pair of albums containing a few monster singles and a considerable amount of unsteady, unassured material, why mess around the third time out? From beginning to end, *Good Girl Gone Bad* is as pop as pop gets in 2007, each one of its 12 songs a potential hit in some territory. Unlike *Music of the Sun* or *A Girl Like Me*, neither Caribbean flavorings nor ballad ODs are part of the script, and there isn't an attempt to make something as theatrical as "Unfaithful." There is, however, another '80s hit involved: just as "SOS" appropriated Soft Cell's version of "Tainted Love," "Shut Up and Drive" turns New Order's "Blue Monday" into a sleek, forthcoming proposition, one that is as undeniable and rocking as Sugababes' 2002 U.K. smash "Freak Like Me" (a cover of Adina Howard's 1995 hit that swiped from another '80s single, Gary Numan's "Are Friends Electric?"). "Shut Up and Drive" is part of an all-upbeat opening sequence that carries through five songs. Rihanna knows exactly what she wants and is in total control at all times, even when she's throwing things and proclaiming "I'm a fight a man" amid marching percussion and synthesizers set on "scare" during "Breakin' Dishes." The album's lead song and lead single, "Umbrella," is her best to date, delivering mammoth if spacious drums, a towering backdrop during the chorus, and vocals that are somehow totally convincing without sounding all that impassioned -- an ideal spot between trying too hard and boredom, like she might've been on her 20th take, which only adds to the song's charm. The album's second half is relatively varied and a little heavier on acoustic guitar use, but it's not lacking additional standouts. Three consecutive Timbaland productions, including one suited for a black college marching band and another that effectively pulls the romantically codependent heartstrings, enhance the album rather than make it more scattered. ---Andy Kellman, AllMusic Review

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