



## JOHNNY GILL

### *Game Changer II*

There is one undeniable fact about Johnny Gill's Grammy-nominated, multi-platinum career. The singer/songwriter/producer sure knows how to rub music fans the right way.

Gill further fortifies that inimitable legacy with his latest release, *Game Changer II* (J Skillz Records/Kalvary). Like its predecessor, 2014's *Game Changer*, Gill's eighth solo studio album *Game Changer II* arrived packed with an avalanche of hits. In fact, the singer quickly claimed an R&B No. 1 with the set's lead single "Soul of a Woman." the song praises the power of women. The poignant song opens a rare window into Johnny's personal life as it was primarily inspired by his mother, Annie Mae. "I've been holding on to this Greg Pagani song since the last album," Johnny shares, "listening to the demo for my own personal pleasure. It's not your everyday song," —which is exquisitely captured in its accompanying video co-starring Emmy Award winner Tiffany Haddish.

*GC II*'s second single, which went top ten on the charts, is: "Perfect." Extolling the virtues of natural beauty, strength and intellect, the sultry ballad reunites Gill with his New Edition bandmate Ralph Tresvant. But ballads weren't the only thing on Gill's mind while recording this project.

The 11-track set boasts several up-tempo, genre-bending tracks such as the Latin-spiced "Fiesta" featuring icons Carlos Santana and Sheila E., the reggae-tinged love song "Best Thing" as well as "Favorite Girl" — all produced by Grammy Award winning producer/musician/songwriter Blac Elvis out of Atlanta. A surefire standout is "That's My Baby," a sumptuous tribute to one of Gill's biggest heroes, Luther Vandross, produced by the late producer, Ralph Stacy. Rounding out the guest cameos is After 7 lead singer Kevon Edmonds on "Home." And on "So Hard," Gill teams up again with legendary producers Jimmy Jam & Terry Lewis, the masterminds behind his 1990 breakthrough hit "Rub You the Right Way." (Gill shares the creative inspiration behind each *GC II* selection, including three bonus tracks, following the bio.)

"I wanted to focus on including more tempo because I haven't recorded those kinds of songs in a while," says Gill of recruiting Jam & Lewis, Gregg Pagani and Elvis "Blac Elvis" Williams, among other producers. "I like to party as well. So they came up with nice tempo records that allowed me to be Johnny without compromising who I am."

As the formidable next chapter in Gill's career, *Game Changer II* underscores once more why he is a long-distance legacy artist with a brand that's ever-evolving. The album builds on the career renaissance that predecessor *Game Changer* ushered in five years ago. That project detonated six R&B hit singles, including the No. 1 "This One's for Me and You."

In 2018, Johnny Gill's 35th anniversary as a professional entertainer sealed his legendary status. It's been a time that's seen him be successful as a solo artist, as a member of several groups and as the CEO of his own empire under the J Skillz mantle. Even as Motown celebrated its 60th anniversary, Johnny is still proud to have once been a part of that magical company's golden legacy. "I was honored to be signed by Motown," Johnny states. "No matter what era you're in, Motown will always be a landmark in music. Not just for Black folks. Like Smokey said, 'The Sound of Young America' was made to cross over and touch everybody." When he took his career into his own hands and started his J Skillz company and returned to music, it was with every intention to be a soul survivor and a game changer. "If I knew then what I know now," he says shaking his head. "These years have been an experience I could never have paid for. It gave me another level of respect for the industry and what record companies did back then. Until you sit in that chair and realize all of the things that have to be done, it gives you a whole other level of respect. There's no way my last album could have been as successful as it was if it hadn't been my decision – and having the resources - to accomplish all we did. It's been a blessing."

In fact, in every arena that he has entered, the volcanic-voiced Gill has been a game changer. Discovered at 16 years old, he released two albums through Atlantic Records. He next joined now-iconic boy band New Edition, helping them segue melodically from novelty to longevity on timeless classics such as "If It Isn't Love" and "Can You Stand the Rain." As a linchpin of legendary Motown Records' '90s comeback roster, Gill exploded as a solo artist with an indelible one-two punch from producers Jimmy Jam & Terry Lewis ("Rub You the Right Way") and L.A. Reid & Babyface ("My, My, My"). Alongside Gerald Levert and Keith Sweat, Gill established L.S.G., the powerful R&B supergroup behind the sexy smash "My Body." He also formed another supergroup, Heads of State, with New Edition peers Bobby Brown and Tresvant.

Johnny Gill is one of the few artist to score #1 hits with two different groups, duo and also as a solo artist. He's one of the top legendary artist to have hits on the top 10 R&B charts for three decades 80's, 90's and 2000's. He's accomplished a lot in his career as a veteran in this business and deserves a lot of credit for what he's done in almost 40 years in this business.

After a 15-year solo hiatus, Gill made a stunning return to the game with 2011's *Still Winning*. The set peaked at No. 17 on the Billboard 200 and No. 4 on the magazine's R&B album chart. Then came the pivotal *Game Changer* on Gill's own record label J Skillz.

That move also signaled another phase in Gill's multi-faceted career: entrepreneur. With *Game Changer* and *Game Changer II* now under his belt, Gill and Tresvant did a joint-venture collaboration. The pair teamed up again for Ralph Tresvant single, "All Mine", on Ralph's 2020 solo project. After their partnership resulted in the 2019 hit "Perfect"; why mess with perfection? This time with Ralph taking the lead of course. With production again from Gregg Pagani, "All Mine" is as cool and comfortable as any song ever recorded by either artist.

Following Johnny's involvement in the 2017 television ratings bonanza *The New Edition Story*, Gill recently completed filming a role in *Spinning Gold*. In the forthcoming biopic about Casablanca Records founder Neil Bogart, Gill plays Clarence Burke Jr. who was the lead singer of the Five Stairsteps (top 40 hit "O-o-h Child").

A fervent believer in giving back, Gill is a longtime supporter of the L.A. Speech & Language Therapy Center, which provides treatment and services for children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and

other diagnoses. “Music is so universal and can be so healing to our souls,” says Gill. “I love watching these children work through their problems, evolve and do things no one ever dreamed they could.”

Coming off the huge success of the widely anticipated New Edition ‘The Culture Tour 2022’, Gill still have other projects ongoing, a third single from Game Changer II on the way and a possible reboot of Game Changer II. A wish list that includes recording a Christmas album and a covers album of R&B classics by Vandross, Al Green and more (“All the greats I grew up listening to,” says Gill), the singer clearly isn’t planning to step out of the game just yet. Ask the secret behind his career longevity, Gill laughs and says, “If I knew what the secret was, I’d bottle it up and sell it. All I can say is I still have a passion for music. And there’s still a platform out here for me to express myself and inspire people in a world that still needs a lot of work.”

Whatever Johnny Gill has coming next, fans can rest assured of one thing. He never just plays the game. He changes it ... every time.

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