

**SYLEENA JOHNSON**  
CHAPTER 3: THE FLESH

JIVE



**There's something soulful blowing in the Chicago wind.**



With R&B often leaning toward the blues, Syleena Johnson's voice rings true on this joyful collection of love anthems. The Chicago artist's third offering finds her in heavy-hitting hometown company. Johnson creates a Chi-town stepper's classic with R. Kelly on "Special Occasion," conjuring images of a couple celebrating on the dance floor. "Hypnotic" is an intoxicating club joint with Kelly and Fabolous, on which Johnson's strong, throaty vocals ride Kelly's head-bobbing beat. The Kanye West-produced "Bulls Eye" aims straight for the heart, with Common delivering a verse about

relationships and growth. Twista spits quick opening lines before Johnson aurally oozes over the freaky down-tempo "Phone Sex." Johnson also shines when she ventures outside the Windy City. Jermaine Dupri joins her for the summery "Classic Love Song," while "More," with Anthony Hamilton, is equally sunny and sweet. Aside from jilted-themed

**EXTRA!  
EXTRA!**

Syleena's father is '60s R&B/blues singer Sly Johnson.

tracks like "Leave Me Alone" and "Apartment 4 Rent," this album is an upbeat reminder that, although it may hurt, love can still feel—and sound—brand-new.

Laura Checkoway



Jim Jones

**JIM JONES**  
HARLEM: THE DIARY OF A SUMMER

KOCH



The Dipset capo favors breezy, bass-heavy beats instead of chipmunked soul samples to celebrate the 'hood's favorite season. This new sonic direction can be heard on songs like the smooth "Summer Wit Miami" and the hometown ode "Harlem (Strutting Thru Harlem)." But this is no crossover music. Even with R&B-sounding production, Jones keeps it gangsta, especially on more sinister songs like the menacing "Penitentiary Chances," featuring crew-mate Hell Rell. Unlike Jones's disjointed debut, *Harlem* has a cohesive and consistent sound minus the unnecessary cameos. This is summer rider music at its best—a hot and reckless journey.

Donnie Kwak

pin"); and breadwinning in the urban jungle ("The Ghetto"). On "Food for Thought," he cleverly layers his rhymes and asks, "Damn, can I get a piece of bread / Without somebody in the street tryin' to eat what I said?" It's that hunger that makes *Chemistry* bubble from the beaker to the speakers.

Justin Monroe

**CUBAN LINK**  
CHAIN REACTION

M.O.B.



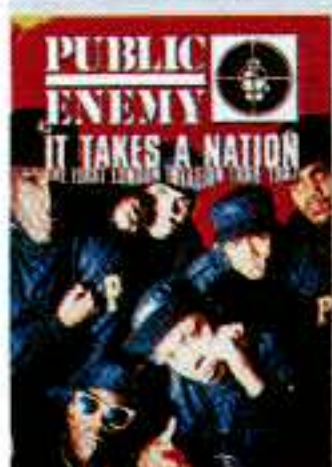
Withstanding Big Pun's immense shadow and Fat Joe's verbal wrath, Cuban Link shines with introspection on his first solo release. *Chain Reaction* finds the former TS member cleverly moving from the streets ("Talk About It") to the sheets ("My Lady"). Whether spitting alongside Avant's crooning or Jadakiss's rough rhymes, Cuban adapts to each track, especially the grimier ones. "I've been gone for a minute / Niggas thought I was finished," he raps on "Tonight's the Night," "But the scars that I caught just added more to the image." And that's how he stays a cut above.

Jayson Rodriguez



**BLOCK BUSTERS**

Zooming in on the latest music DVDs



**PUBLIC ENEMY—IT TAKES A NATION: THE FIRST LONDON INVASION TOUR 1987**

(Slamjamz)

REW: Chuck D engaging the English audience through call-and-response political discourse.  
FF: Mista Chuck and Professor Griff discussing American public policy with a dreary British journalist.



**DISCO DVD: EPISODE ONE** (Disco D Productions)

REW: Producer Disco D's exclusive footage of G Unit members performing during *The Massacre* release party at 50 Cent's Connecticut mansion.  
FF: Former Da Band member Sara Stokes and her husband appear way too often.



**THE INDUSTRY** (Image Entertainment)

REW: Chingy praising Chaka Zulu, his then manager—just months before Ching-a-ling's falling out with Ludacris and Zulu.  
FF: The anti-industry stance on labels being out only for money becomes a little heavy handed; business is business. Jayson Rodriguez