



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, FL, 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 ...

Gloria Estefan

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