



JIM BESSMAN'S BILLBOARD TOP TEN PICKS FOR 2005

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Billboard contributor

1. Sheryl Crow, "Wildflower" (A&M). Great artist album from a great artist.

2. The Siegel-Schwall Band, "Flash Forward" (Alligator). Fabled Chicago blues 'n rock band's first studio album in 30 years is a wondrous return to its glory days.

3. Donna The Buffalo, "Life's a Ride" (Reincarnate Music/BMG). Immensely tuneful take from the exceptionally eclectic jamsters.

4. Shooter Jennings, "Put the 'O' Back in Country" (Universal South). Hardcore country/rock chip off the ol' Waylon.

5. Paul Anka, "Rock Swings" (Verve). Only a great songwriter could keep this concept from disintegrating into a joke.

6. Kate Bush, "Aerial" (Columbia). Eventful two-disc release from a reclusive legend.

7. Neil Diamond, "12 Songs" (Columbia). Rubin gives Diamond the Johnny Cash treatment, bringing the great singer/songwriter back to relevance.

8. Madonna, "Confessions on a Dance Floor" (Warner Bros.). Re-invention? Recommitment.

9. Burt Bacharach, "At This Time" (Columbia). Pop song composing genius adds heartfelt lyrics in confronting troubled times.

10. The Like, "Are You Thinking What I'm Thinking?" (Geffen). Intense L.A. power-pop girl trio does its music luminary fathers proud.