



# Dance-Pop Divas

## Samantha James And Colette Bring Fresh Female Energy To Club Culture

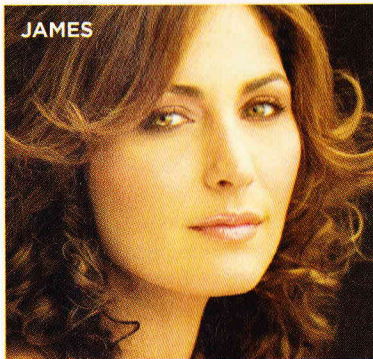
The heritage of the female singer/songwriter in dance music is an artistically rich, if commercially bereft one.

From **Kristine W** to **Tracey Thorn**, women with lyrical, folk tendencies who prefer beats over strums have made timeless music that gets played on mainstream dance-floors (via the remix) throughout the decades. But they have a hard time finding a wide audience for their original work.

Two stunning new releases from San Francisco indie Om Records seek to buck the trend by appealing to audiences outside of electronic's borders: newcomer **Samantha James'** "Rise" and "Push" from the label's first lady, **Colette**.

"Both bring a breath of fresh air into the male-dominated DJ culture of the electronic/dance markets, as well as crossing borders into larger pop markets," Om marketing VP **Gunnar Hissam** says.

James' album is a long time coming. Om's been talking her up and circulating remixes of the title track—which went to No. 1 on the



Hot Dance/Club Play chart in April—since late 2005.

"The album has been in the works for so long because we didn't want to rush her, so that the quality level would be as high as the first two songs

we've leaked," Hissam says. "Rise" has sold 12,000 downloads on iTunes alone, and follow-up "Angel Love" has been Om's most-downloaded song for months, selling 3,000 copies so far, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

"We felt that the momentum we were building was perfect for allowing her profile to grow organically," Hissam says. "The biggest applause so far has been from the fans actively searching out her music and downloading it."

Produced by **Sebastian Arocha Morton**, aka **ROCA-**

**sound** (who worked on the Grammy Award-nominated "Little Miss Sunshine" soundtrack, and is currently in the studio with **Donna Summer**), "Rise" the album is a ceaselessly smooth collection of

groovy pop, as elegant as **Sade**, and wrapped with the unmistakably warm thump of San Francisco house. It's undeniable as chill-out club fodder, but also as an adult contemporary "back-to-mine" soundtrack or for high-end retail outlets/poolsides/lobby bars, in real life or on film. Anyone could listen to this anywhere and be seduced.

A singer/songwriter and DJ, Colette's a dance music triple-threat. Behind the decks, she tours regularly and is a member of girl-jock collective **Superjane** with **Dayhota** and **DJ Heather**. While her sets lean toward bumping house, her productions go pop: 2005 debut "Hypnotized" (Om) featured a cover of **Cherelle's** '84 hit "I Didn't Mean to Turn You On" and the single "What Will She Do for Love," a cooing narrative that channeled young **Madonna**.

"Push," set for a Sept. 4 release, sheds the downtempo

vibe of "Hypnotized" to go more boldly into pop. It recalls Norwegian chanteuse **Annie's** self-aware hipster bubble gum, but with fully American references. First single "About Us" is crisp four-minute synth-pop with a welcome kick drum in the bridge; "Funny" features a rap from St. Louis' **Black Spade** that feels surprisingly organic. It's a big deal—and a definite declaration of mainstream intentions—for a dance artist to include hip-hop in any form these days.

We're also digging **Fauxliage**, **Leigh Nash's** dreamy team-up with **Delerium** producers **Bill Leeb** and **Rhys Fulber** on **Netwerk**; **Fontella Bass** (the voice of 1965 hit "Rescue Me") turning in an aching, somber vocal on **the Cinematic Orchestra's** "Ma Fleur" (Domino); and **Cirque du Soleil** vocalist **Kristy Thirsk** guesting on **D:Fuse & Hiratska's** dreamy "Skyline Lounge" (Lost Angeles). •••