

"Now Hear This" Sept. 30,
VARIOUS ARTISTS 2000

The Best of Diana Ross. The Best of Curtis Mayfield and the Impressions, The Best of ABC, The Best of Night Ranger (20th Century Masters Series, Universal Music Co.)

Amid the wreckage of Diana Ross' recent ego-fueled fiasco, the Supremes reunion tour, it is easy to forget just how good she was even in her solo years. Universal's new "best of" series recaptures that marvelous pop era with an 11-song collection, every one an essential early 1970s gem, including "Ain't No Mountain High Enough" to "Endless Love."

A worthy companion is the "best of" collection for Curtis Mayfield. He may not have the enduring name of Smokey Robinson or the Temptations, but Mr. Mayfield and his Impressions set the standard for gospel-influenced pop that echoes through the decades.

Entirely less successful is a pair of "best ofs" from the 1980s. There is something morbidly funny about the notion of a best of for ABC and Night Ranger. While both bands were perfectly competent (if undistinguished) pop hit-makers, they were hardly enduring artists. The creators of "Sister Christian" (Night Ranger) and "The Look of Love" (ABC) are barely