

Johnny Gill – Still Winning (2011)

Written by bluelover

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01 – *Still Waiting* 02 – *Let's Stay Together* 03 – *In The Mood* 04 – *Just The Way You Are*
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05 – *Black Box* 06 – *Long, Long Time* 07 – *2nd Place*
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08 – *Who Is He* 09 – *It Would Be You* 10 – *My Love*

Fifteen long years. That's how long it was between solo albums for Johnny Gill. In between his last release, 1996's *Let's Get the Mood Right* and his latest project, *Still Winning*, which came out on Oct. 11, 2011, Johnny's released albums with two groups, *New Edition* and *LSG*, but this is his official return to making solo music. And the return's a successful one. Unlike some other artists who also perform in vocal groups, Johnny's voice is more than qualified to carry the full weight an album, and it does here. *Still Winning* lives up to its name.

Although Bobby Brown's the one who gained the most notoriety, Johnny Gill has always been the member of '80s/'90s band boy *New Edition* with the most vocal talent. After Bobby left the group in the '80s and Johnny stepped, J.G. raised N.E.'s level of singing talent significantly. And on his sixth solo album, Johnny fully displays his vocal talents on romantic ballads like "In the Mood," "It Would Be You," "Let's Stay Together" and a remake of the Paul McCartney & Wings song "My Love." And although the other members of *New Edition* are nowhere to be found here, Johnny reunites with the other members of the supergroup *LSG* -- Gerald Levert and Keith Sweat -- on the scrumptious "Long Long Time." On each of these tracks, Johnny's rich voice conveys a warmth and emotion that's becoming more and more rare in today's increasingly cold, impersonal R&B world, a world that's become more and more reliant on Auto-Tune and drum machines.

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Although Still Winning mainly consists of bump-n-grind music, Johnny does vary from the formula on the album's upbeat, trendy title track, where he sings about achieving your goals and being successful, despite haters and negativity trying to bring you down. It's a nice change of pace, but in all honesty, it's the slow ballads that rule the day here; and this is completely appropriate, since Johnny's one of the masters at it. Overall, Still Standing doesn't break much new ground musically, but you might not hear a better album of bedroom music all year. ---
Mark Edward Nero, About.com Guide

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