

Oleta Adams

Being the daughter of a minister, it's no surprise that Oleta Adams' roots are in gospel, as she often performed in her father's church. But her formal introduction to the masses began rather unexpectedly. While performing in a Kansas City hotel, Oleta Adams was discovered by Curt Smith and Roland Orzabal of Tears for Fears, and she was invited to participate in the recording of the British band's follow-up to the immensely popular 1985 album *Songs From the Big Chair*. When Tears for Fears unleashed the long-awaited *The Seeds of Love* in 1989, listeners were taken aback by the soulful female voice that was prominently featured on the album. Her vocal contributions to *The Seeds of Love* helped it generate generally positive reviews. In 1990, Tears for Fears' Roland Orzabal and *Seeds of Love*



producer Dave Bascombe produced Oleta Adams' debut release, *Circle of One*. One of the album's standout tracks was a stunningly performed rendition of "Get Here," written and originally performed by Brenda Russell. Whereas Russell's version was a bit on the cutesy side, Adams virtually reinvented the song as an aching, gospel-tinged ballad. "Get Here" soared into the Top Ten, and the single's success helped *Circle of One* achieve gold status. When Oleta Adams' second album, *Evolution*, was released in 1993, she inched closer toward the adult contemporary ballad schlock that has plagued such gifted vocalists as Anita Baker. Despite ample production from Stewart Levine (Patti LaBelle, Simply Red) and Oleta Adams' vocal prowess, generally weak material marred the album, though it included a stirring version of Billy Joel's "New York State of Mind." 1995's *Movin' On* attempted a more R&B approach, but too much outside input made it a disjointed affair. The album boasted credits from producers, including Vassal Benford (Mariah Carey, Toni Braxton), Michael J. Powell (Anita Baker, James Ingram), and Alan Rich and Jud J. Friedman (Whitney Houston), but again the songs were weak, and the slick production undermined the raw intensity of Adams' always glorious vocals. The religious album *Come Walk With Me* followed in 1995, and she returned to R&B with 2001's *All the Love*.

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Year	Song	<u>UK</u>	<u>US HOT 100</u>	<u>US R&B</u>	<u>US AC</u>
1989	" Woman in Chains " (w/ Tears for Fears)	26	36	-	-
1990	"Rhythm Of Life"	52	-	9	21
1990	"Circle Of One"	95	-	-	-
1991	" Get Here (If You Can) "	4	5	8	3
1991	"You've Got To Give Me Room"	49	-	-	-
1991	"Circle Of One" (reissue)	73	-	27	17
1991	"Don't Let The Sun Go Down On Me"	33	-	-	-
1993	"I Just Had To Hear Your Voice"	42	-	97	-
1995	"Never Knew Love"	22	-	-	-
1995	"Rhythm Of Life (remix)"	38	-	-	-
1996	"We Will Meet Again"	51	-	-	-

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