

SINGLES

Edited by Chuck Taylor

POP

★ **WILLA FORD FEATURING MAY** A Toast to Men (3:12)

PRODUCER: Toby Gad

WRITERS: A. Willaford, T. Gad, R. Robinson

PUBLISHERS: various

Lava 301330 (CD promo)

Willa Ford had no problem convincing the masses a couple years ago that she was Atlantic's bad girl. Not only did hit single "I Wanna Be Bad" take a swipe at the pop-princess mold, but her refreshingly audacious persona KO'd PC attitudes into a coma. Weighing Willa 2001 against the 2003 model, however, shows just how far musical morality has moved to the left. "A Toast to Men" is cleaned up for radio, but that doesn't hide the predominant hook (supposedly an age-old sorority chant): "Here's to the men we love to love/Here's to the men in love with us/Here's to the men that pass on us/fuck the men, let's drink to us." A saucy (but graciously playful) videoclip adds fuel to the flamboyant raunch. While pushing the envelope this far comes across as a calculated move—after all, it takes some effort to take attention from pin-up models Britney and Christina nowadays—there's no hiding the fact that underneath it all, a pop hook and catchy chants give this ditty much more meat to the bone than one might suspect. Ford is not reinventing the wheel here, but she's definitely one savvy vixen. We're offering a C for the cheap thrill and an A for the musical vision behind the vamp.—*CT*