



## “SexyBack” | Justin Timberlake



**SINGLE:** “SexyBack”

**ALBUM:** FutureSex/LoveSounds (Jive/Zomba Label Group)

**DATES:** Recorded in December 2005 and mixed in April 2006 at Thomas Crown Headquarters/Magic Mix Factory (Timbaland Studios) in Virginia Beach, VA

**PRODUCERS:** Timbaland and Nate Hills

**ENGINEER:** Jimmy Douglass

**MIXER:** Jimmy Douglass

**MASTERING:** Herb Powers at Powers Mastering Studio

**OTHER PROJECTS:** Aretha Franklin, Chaka Khan, the Rolling Stones, Jodeci, Donny Hathaway, Otis Redding, Jay-Z, Snoop Dogg, Nelly Furtado, Jamie Foxx, Rob Thomas.

**SINGLE SONGWRITERS:** Justin Timberlake, Timbaland, and Nate Hills

**CONSOLE:** 72-channel Neve VR Series

**RECORDERS:** Pro Tools|HD

**MONITORS:** Yamaha NS-10 and Augspurger custom mains

**VOCAL MICROPHONE:** Audio-Technica 4060

**VOCAL MICROPHONE PREAMP:** PreSonus ADL600

**VOCAL PROCESSING:** Universal Audio 1176 limiter

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## ENGINEER'S DIARY

By now you've probably all heard that Justin Timberlake is “bringing sexy back.” Regardless of your own personal opinion on the subject (or whether you even knew that ‘sexy’ had wandered off somewhere) the singer/songwriter's song that boasts of finding and bringing it home is an unequivocal success. Thanks to producers and co-songwriters Nate Hills and Timbaland (the latter of which lends his own voice to the track), Timberlake's first single from FutureSex/LoveSounds – his sophomore solo album – channels Prince's most slamming dance numbers, getting quite close to his purple majesty's aural sex appeal of the mid- to late-1980s.

According to “SexyBack” engineer and mixer Jimmy Douglass, the second album from Timberlake may have been carefully conceived and executed, but everything comes natural and easy for the pop star. “Working with him is a dream,” he declares. “He's a total professional. Things get bigger and better each time he does something. He's worked with so many different people that I get the sense from him that he's on that other level – he's perfected his craft.”

Fronting the slamming dance groove and retro synth sounds of “SexyBack” is Timberlake's cooing vocal, tastefully distorted with more than a slight array of effects. It all came together so fast (all tracking took place in one day) that Douglass can't even recall what was used. “He said, ‘Give me some effect.’ I gave him some effect. ‘That's great,’ he said. I overdid it, like ‘Here's an effect!’ But he liked it. I thought it was a bit much, but it was what he wanted.”

A few months went by before the mix, but little changed from the rough that was left at the end of the tracking session, which took place at Timbaland's newly christened and WSDG-designed recording facility. “Working here has a great advantage,” Douglass explains of the private studio that he conceived with the help of John Storyk. “Everything remains exactly as you leave it. What you don't finish today you can do tomorrow. The other great thing about working here is that the only thing to do in Virginia Beach is to work. In the other cities, there are so many distractions. Here, we're very efficient.”

Timberlake's “SexyBack” tracking chain consisted of an Audio-Technica 4060, PreSonus ADL600 microphone preamp, and a Universal Audio 1176 limiter, which was used “just 'cause, I was trying out a different vocal chain that day,” explains Douglass on the deviation from his default Neumann U 87-fronted vocal chain. Clearly, the new chain worked well.

