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Sincere, Josephine – Sweet harmony – [KixxRecords] – 2004

The KixxRecords HomePage gives a much better Bio than I ever could, but the highlights are this young lady is from Philldelphia, is 18 years old and is going to be around for a very long time. Now I will say right from the outset that if you like your RnB with 4 beats to the bar, a catchy chorus and lots of samples, then this is not for you. If, on the other hand, you like it with the edge of a samurai sword, jazzy riffs and vocal scales that would make Everest blush then you should read on. But whatever your taste in music, by the end of this album at least you'll be aware that there is definitely a change coming. "Sweet Harmony" immediately gets your attention, not least for the fact that that is also the only lyric in the entire 3:46 of the composition. Josephine sings all the background vocals, and harmonies and apparently there are 9 layers of them so laying this down in the studio must have been fun. Essentially it is vocals over an edecic jazz vibe. The bass-line bobs & bounces as Josephine does her stuff accompanied by delicate sax and Rhodes. After a few listens, I'm now really feeling this, but I have to say that the outset, I thought it would have been a great intro or interlude. But most probably won't be able to stay the distance. After such a wild beginning, things get "a lot easier" with a beautiful cover version of "The Five Stairsteps" classic "Ooh Child". There's nothing really to say about it, except that it's delightful to listen to. Listen out for the exquisite ad-libs. "I Like It" is a beautiful neo-soul ballad, reminiscent of Jill Scott in full flow. Sexy sax, and chilled out vibes are the order of the day and this is going to be one of the classic neo-soul tunes of the future. At this point it's fair to warn you that things tend to get deep, dark and moody. "You" kicks in at a remarkably laid back 50bpm, which for most would be the equivalent of a funeral dirge, but stick with it. The vocals carry this on the wings of angels, especially the jazzy adlibs midway and it picks up to a warming crescendo of emotion. Now you probably won't instantly recognise Evelyn King's "Shame" as it's transformed from an 80's dance floor filler to a sexy ballad of half the speed. But this is gorgeous. And just as you think it can't get any slower then next tune comes in at 40bpm. "Tell Me" is more of an after-dinner jazz special. The sax and vocals vie for dominance in a wonderfully intricate tapestry of sound. Things pick up slightly with "Still Feels Good", but this is still another smooth, stripped back vibe that's almost a poem with acoustic piano accompaniment. But this works on a variety of levels, best experienced in the dark with a drink and nothing else on your mind. "Snowflakes" keeps it in the same groove and is probably my favourite track on the album. Dark and moody in places this challenges the senses not to respond by picking you up and then setting you down as gently as a baby on a goose-feather pillow. A great way to spend 4:41 seconds of your time. "Do You Love Me" remarkably doesn't give any props to Leon Ware & T-Boy Ross, because it sounds uncannily like "I Want You" with the words changed, but that apart this is still a very nice tune. "Just a Friend" has a bass-line that smacks of the Blacksheep's "The Choice Is Yours (Revisited)" but has sweet jazzy lyrics that flow like molten lava topped off with Mario's "Just A Friend" as well as Dionne Warwick's "Walk On By" – original in it's ability to turn three very different songs into a totally new one, this gets marks for definite ingenuity. "Where's My Soda At" is one of the best skits/interludes I've ever heard. An accapella rap with human beatbox a-la "La-Di-Da-Di", the rap is intelligent and humorous and the second sung verse is divine, but that's all you get, because it only lasts a minute and a half. "The Next One" takes it up a notch to a highly danceable neo vibe that leaves the jazzy vibes at home and comes to the plate with phat beats, magnetic bass and more attitude than you could think possible. The instrumental of "Sweet Harmony" brings up the rear and "that", as they say, "is it". It lasts for just over 50 minutes and is wonderfully done. A heads up for those who go looking, the March 2005 release will be re-titled "WildFlower", just so you know what to ask/look for. Personally, I Don't know why they would want to change the title, the name sums it up perfectly.

Sweet Harmony.

Added: March 28th 2005

Reviewer: Alfie Da Funkjunky

Score: ★★★★★

Related Link: Home Page & Bio

Hits: 129

Language:

