

Stefania Rava – The Sweetest Sound (2010)

Written by bluesever (Bogdan Marszałkowski)

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1 *That's What Friends Are For* 3:34 2 *Burning Up The Carnival* 4:38 3 *Empty Faces* 4:25
4 *Snowflake* 4:17 5 *The Sweetest Pain* 4:44 6 *Can't Sleep* 6:10 7 *Family Affair* 5:53 8
Never Was Love 5:07 9 *The Sweetest Sound* 4:30 10 *Ordinary Pain* 5:01 Double Bass –
Aldo Zunino Drums – Shane Forbes Piano – Andrea Pozza Saxophone, Flute, Arranged By –
Mattia Cigalini Vocals – Stefania Rava

Paolo Scotti's collaboration with Pony Canyon to produce the Norma Blu Imprint for the Japanese market began in the spring of 2009 with the release of Stefania Rava's *Send In The Clowns*, a great collection of songs introducing a new vocal talent to the Japanese market.

A little over a year later and Stefania Rava is back for her second (and Norma Blu's tenth) album release. As with last year's album, *The Sweetest Sound* sees her backed by a talented group of musicians, (including the likes of Andrea Pozza and Mattia Cigalini) offering ten new versions of some classic tunes.

Rava starts out with a version of the perennial club favourite *That's What Friends Are For*, and the excellent vocals and the flute from Mattia Cigalini combine to make it a sound cover of a classic. Things stay firmly on the dance floor for the next tune, *Burning Up The Carnival*, a great Brazilian jazz number that is a perfect tune for the current summery weather in Tokyo, and this is followed by another Brazilian style number, *Empty Faces*. Just when you think it might be time for a breather, the tempo gets cranked up another notch for a version of Joe Sample's composition, *Snowflakes*, a tune which allows Stefania Rava to show off her scat skills and which is definitely one of the high points on the album.

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Things slow down a bit for the mid-section of the album, with The Sweetest Pain, which is a superb rendition of the Dexter Wansel tune that stays with you long after the music has stopped. Next up are Can't Stop and a new arrangement of the Sly Stone classic Family Affair, which works well, but these simply pave the way for a storming version of Never Was Love that certainly deserves a lot of attention.

The album closes with the title track, a dreamy lullaby, and a version of Stevie Wonder's Ordinary Pain, both of which are excellently executed.

Producer Paolo Scotti has delivered the goods once again, working to get the best out of a talented group of musicians. Stefania Rava has built on the success of Send In The Clowns and taken it to the next level, and The Sweetest Sound is an album that needs to be heard. A top quality jazz vocal album. ---tokyojazznotes.blogspot.com

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