Roxette – Room Service (2009)



01. Real Sugar
02. The Centre Of The Heart
03. Milk And Toast And Honey
04. Jefferson
05. Little Girl
06. Looking For Jane
07. Bringing Me Down To My Knees
08. Make My Head Go Pop
09. Try (Just A Little Bit Harder)
10. Fool
11. It Takes You No Time To Get Here
12. My World, My Love, My Life
13. Entering Your Heart (Bonus)
14. The Weight Of The World (Bonus)
15. Bla Bla Bla Bla Bla (You Broke My Heart) (Bonus)

f proof were needed that Roxette are the new ABBA, the lack of critical respect should be enough. Like Abba, Roxette is a masterful pop band (with just the right amount of kitsch in its armor) that routinely gets slagged off for lacking substance, whatever that may be. Room Service showcases a band at the top of its form with its feet firm on the pedal: this album is a case study in songcraft and pop smarts. With its na-na-na choruses and sparkly guitars, Room Service is also trademark Roxette, a mostly no-surprises package that divides its time between the soaring, emotive power ballads and the rife-with-hooks rock-dance stompers that the band pretty much took patents out on back in the '80s and '90s. This is a group that has gotten really good at what it is doing, without getting bored doing it. Result? Probably the best Roxette album since Joyride. Opening tracks "Real Sugar" and "The Centre of the Heart" with their now-rock, now-disco, always-pop attack are effortless up-tempo smashes that deliver an unstoppable one-two sucker punch. On the other hand, "Milk and Toast and Honey" and "Bringing Me Down

to My Knees" are big-ticket slow-burners that are as good as adult contemporary gets. "Try (Just a Little Bit Harder)" burgles the "Just a little bit" refrain from Aretha Franklin's "Respect" and uses it to spike the sort of lush, half-pensive ballad that Roxette can toss off in its sleep by now. "You Make My Heart Go Pop" is a noisy, overproduced Top-Ten-here-we-come sparkler that'll zoom straight to the trash-magnet center of your brain and stick there for weeks on end. This album also shows a lyrically sharper Roxette, less eager than before to compromise the words for the hooks. Sure, they may occasionally slip into cliché and overt sentimentalism, but they're never less than tuneful. Both Per Gessle and Marie Frederiksson are in fine vocal form, especially Marie, who's equally proficient whether she's doing elegiac laments or burning the house down. Room Service is an exciting, immediate, high-gloss pop gem that contains very little filler indeed. On it Roxette may not be making any great leaps forward, but when you're in such a great place why bother moving? ---Leslie Mathew, AllMusic Review

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