

Sade - Lovers Rock (2000)

Written by bluelover

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1 *By Your Side* 4:34 2 *Flow* 4:34 3 *King Of Sorrow* 4:53 4 *Somebody Already Broke My Heart* 5:01 5 *All About Our Love* 2:40 6 *Slave Song* 4:12 7 *The Sweetest Gift* 2:18 8 *Every Word* 4:04 9 *Immigrant* 3:48 10 *Lovers Rock* 4:13 11 *It's Only Love That Gets You Through*

Bass – Paul S. Denman Guitar, Woodwind, Programmed By – Stuart Matthewman
Keyboards, Programmed By – Andrew Hale Percussion – Karl Vanden Bossche Producer,
Performer, Arranged By – Sade Vocals – Leroy Osbourne, Sade Adu + Keyboards – Janusz Podrazik
Cello – Andy Nice Backing Vocals – Leroy Osbourne

Lovers Rock, the title of Sade's first album of the 21st century, could be taken on many levels. Never before has the singer infused more mainstream rock elements (prominent strummed guitars) into her music as evidenced by the first single, "By Your Side." That's not to say that she has eschewed her own tried-and-true brand of smoky, dusky ballads. The singer/songwriter is reunited with co-producer Mike Pela and musician/songwriters Andrew Hale, Stuart Matthewman, and Paul S. Denman; and Lovers Rock finds them all in fine form. "Somebody Already Broke My Heart," "Every Word," and "Lovers Rock" are vintage Sade. ---Ed Hogan, AllMusic Review

It's been eight years since Sade's last studio album. Since then the music world has seen grunge define a generation, electronica arrive and plateau, and teen-pop flourish. And somewhere, Sade was probably making out. Her new album Lovers Rock is the simplest of concept albums. It's a soundtrack for lovers, lovers who are in love and making love and lovers who have been scorned. The album finds Sade doing what she does best, but for some reason it hasn't gotten tired at all.

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The disc opens with “By Your Side,” taking the typical “I’ll stand by you” fare and accentuating it with the realistic demands of a relationship: “I’ll tell you you’re right when you want.” She loves him that blindly and it’s damn beautiful. Similarly, “The Sweetest Gift” and “All About Our Love” are sugary sweet declarations of devotion. “Flow” absolutely flows, standing out from the rest with its mixture of folky acoustic guitar, slow-paced hip-hop loops, and layered harmonies. It is, quite simply, perfection.

“King of Sorrow” exquisitely explores the complexities of a faltering relationship (“There inside our private war/I died the night before”). She is clearly torn between what she’s invested and the opportunities she might be missing: “Will I disappoint my future if I stay?” Lovers Rock can be best described as one continuous composition. Hell, even Sade’s band seems to view it as one united flow, the rhythm of each song informing the next.

Where songs of a political nature might seem out of place on a similar album, Sade finds a home for two such tracks. “Slave Song” is a subtle social statement, calling for an awareness of history and the sensibility to rise above it: “Teach my beloved children who have been enslaved/To reach for the light continually.” Aptly framed in hip-hop beats, the ominous “Immigrant” explores other racial tensions: “Coming from where he did/He was turned away from every door like Joseph/To even the strongest among us/That would be too much.” The sophisticated vocal arrangements of both tracks are stark and astonishing.

The success of Lovers Rock proves that Sade can wait as long as she likes between albums and there will always be an audience waiting. Whether covering the standard topics of love or tackling more controversial issues, her classic lyrics and smooth grooves never grow old. The timeless craft of songs like “By Your Side” have made her the most unlikely of superstars. ---Sal Cinquemani, slantmagazine.com

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