

Leela James – Loving You More... In The Spirit Of Etta James (2012)

Written by bluelover

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01 – Soul Will Never Die 02 – Something's Got A Hold On Me 03 – It Hurts Me So Much 04 – I'm Loving You More Every Day 05 – I'd Rather Go Blind 06 – I Want You To Ta-Ta You Baby 07 – Damn Your Eyes 08 – Nobody Loves You Like Me 09 – Old School Kind Of Love 10 – Sunday Kind Of Love 11 – At Last

When legendary blues and Jazz singer Etta James died of leukemia in January 2012, she left behind millions of mourning fans, one of whom was critically acclaimed and highly talented Soul singer Leela James. And although the two weren't related, Leela was so impacted by her idol's passing that she decided to record a full album of remakes of Etta's songs. The result, *Loving You More ... in the Spirit of Etta James*, is not only a loving and respectful tribute to one of the best singers in American history, it's an album that Etta herself would likely be flattered by and proud of. *Loving You More*, which will be released in the U.S. July 31, 2012, is a fitting homage to Etta's musical legacy. ---Mark Edward Nero, randb.about.com

After one album for Stax, Leela James returns to Shanachie, the label that facilitated the all-covers set *Let's Do It Again*. One could be forgiven for glancing at the back of *Loving You More...In the Spirit of Etta James*, recognizing that all but two songs were once recorded by Etta, and feeling let down that Leela, once more, is leaning on music from an era that predates her birth. After all, her previous album was her best yet and showed that she was coming into her own as a songwriter. However, *Loving You More* is both reverent and imaginative. It's not just the range of the source material, which roams from the earliest part of Etta's career (including 1961's "At Last" and "Sunday Kind of Love") to the later years (Johnny "Guitar" Watson's "I Want to Ta-Ta You Baby," covered by Etta in 1998). It's also the boldness that comes with the number of drastic rearrangements, the most excellent of which is the

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transformation of the blues-gospel ballad "I'm Loving You More Every Day" into late-'70s/early-'80s-style soul-disco. The two originals -- "Soul Will Never Die" and "Old School Kind of Love" -- are sturdy enough to be mistaken for covers. Leela honors her hero and, yes, makes nine old songs her own. That's not easy to do. ---Andy Kellman, Rovi

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