

Leela James – My Soul (2010)

Written by bluelover

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01. *I Ain't New To This* (2:30)
02. *So Cold* (3:43) [play](#)
03. *The Fact Is* (4:08)
04. *I Want It All* (3:33) [play](#)
05. *Party All Night* (4:03)
06. *Mr. Incredible Ms. Unforgettable (Feat. Raheem DeVaughn)* (3:52)
07. *Tell Me You Love Me* (3:30)
08. *Let It Roll* (2:44)
09. *Supa Luva* (4:52)
10. *If It's Wrong* (3:21)
11. *It's Over* (3:27)

Personnel

- * Dwayne Moore - Bass
- * Shelby Johnson - Composer, Vocals (Background)
- * Milton Fletcher Jr. - Keyboards
- * Bud Wales - Sax (Tenor)
- * Brenda Walkin - Sax (Tenor)
- * Barry Wilson - Sax (Baritone)
- * Deborah Mannis-Gardner - Sample Clearance
- * Tiffany Wilson - Vocals (Background)
- * Raheem DeVaughn - Composer, Vocals (Background), Vocals
- * Johnnie "Smurf" Smith - Keyboards
- * Leela James - Arranger, Composer, Vocals (Background),
- * George "Spanky" McCurdy - Drums

Let's Do It Again, a covers album released on an independent label in 2009, fared significantly better on the charts than Leela James' 2005 debut, a major-label release. One could interpret

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this irony as a case of a major mishandling an artist, but it's just as likely that it took a few years for word about James to spread. She's one of those R&B singers whose '70s-throwback voice belies her birth year (1983), built more for a steady career and a slowly developing fan base than overnight platinum success. Now on Stax, longtime home of Mavis Staples (one of her most evident inspirations), James finds herself in an ideal setting. My Soul is James' best yet in every way. It does not feature quite as many big-name collaborators or eye-popping elements as her debut, but the material is stronger, more balanced between vintage and contemporary sounds, and James sounds more comfortable in her voice. Just as important is that she is coming into her own as a songwriter; four of the songs were written entirely by her, and they are among the album's most affecting moments, ranging from the yearning, dropped-guard "So Cold," to the forceful "I Want It All," to the carefree "Let It Roll." Do make sure you stay until the end, through the steamy "Supa Luva" and "If It's Wrong," as well as the deadly "It's Over" ("That's why I changed the locks on my door, 'cause love don't live here no more"). ---Andy Kellman, AllMusic Review

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