

Leela James Delivers Thought U Knew & Video For Whatcha Done Now



Leela James is back with her cozy and familiar eighth collection of songs, *Thought U Knew*. James's voice has always

been perceived as a throwback because of its maturity and her affinity for R&B legends whose influence is easy to hear. But the millennial singer was a precocious talent who was recognized early on by both the Godfather of Soul James Brown and Soul Survivor Pete Rock. Two decades on and her vocals are an underrated but established part of the R&B world despite the genre's battle to remain relevant in the mainstream.

Thought U Knew is consistent and stands firm on James's artistry, comprising nine songs entrenched in the habits of classic soul, blues and funk. The title track taps Bootsy Collins for its musical direction as she promises to be a woman who never loses her composure because a relationship has ended. Pieces of the past are also evidenced in the usage of Mtume's "Juicy Fruit" for "Good On Me" and Shirley Brown's "Woman To Woman" on "Whatcha Done Now." These musical footnotes work well for James's new nostalgia because her commanding vocals take control and swing like a masterful jazz improvisation. "Faded" cuts through the atmosphere with strong images from lyrics comparing the giddiness of love to being intoxicated. The earthy guitar is straight from Jimi Hendrix's playbook of electrified blues. Rapper Yo Yo is the only guest appearance on the album via "I Was Your Woman," an unapologetic goodbye to a cheating lover. Leela James's *Thought U Knew* reveals that after two decades she is still inspired by and committed to making undiluted soul music. Her voice is just as strong as when she debuted on the *Bait* soundtrack, but today, there is more nuance coming from years of touring and recording. Check out the video for "Whatcha Done Now" below.