

“THEY TOOK THE STARS OUT OF HEAVEN”

Retta and the Smart Fellas

From the dancehalls and music festivals of the great Northwest comes, quite possibly, one the finest Western Swing bands of American music. Retta and the Smart Fellas are a long way from Texas, but only in geography. And on the heels of their second CD release comes more jazzy, infectious swing tunes to keep your toes tapping.

“They Took the Stars Out Of Heaven” is a triumph for swing enthusiasts worldwide. The title track opens the album with a prominent Bob Wills-style fiddle and carries a high energy jazz feel that makes even the folks with two left feet want to get out on the hardwood floor and dance. Retta Christie, lead vocalist, lends her genuine West Coast interpretations to the project interjecting a retro feel to the new breed of swing music.

On their second recorded outing, Retta and the Smart Fellas inject a high-octane dose of New York City Big Band sounds with a definitive Country slant. The best thing about Retta and the Smart Fellas is the fact that they are not Top 40 slush as heard on any given radio station at any given time of the day. This fivesome is artistically underground with a following of fans in the great Northwest as big in number as the heart of Texas. From energetic polkas to tender ballads, “They Took The Stars Out Of Heaven” lies somewhere in the paths of Pee Wee King and Tommy Dorsey.

For Swing lovers to curious listeners, Retta and the Smart Fellas are making more than great music; they are keeping a musical legacy alive. With stark instrumentation and clean, crisp vocals, “They Took the Stars Out Of Heaven” is a throwback to the history of the way it was in Western Swing’s hey-day. And with Grammy awards being given to American roots recording artists, given the right kind of media outlets, Retta and the Smart Fellas should have at least 2 by now.

“They Took The Stars Out Of Heaven” contains nine great tracks that you will want to listen to time and again. The only other project that could ever come close to achieving the same awesome power that this album has brought to the table of rare musical fare would be a live Retta and the Smart Fellas recording. Get this album, devour it and demand more!

Tim Jones

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