SJB SELECTION

REVIEW · SOUL

This Thing Called Life | Ruby Wood feat. Illa J & Abstract Orchestra

A song that wants to talk “about life” starts with a small problem: how do you avoid sounding generic after ten seconds?

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A song that wants to talk “about life” starts with a small problem: how do you avoid sounding generic after ten seconds?

Ruby Wood finds a simple solution.

She doesn’t try to explain life.

She talks about what we share while we’re going through it.

With Illa J and Abstract Orchestra, hip-hop soul, R&B, rap and gospel-flavoured choirs walk into the same room.

The groove holds them together.

It’s a **thoughtful joy**.

The production has a warm, almost honey colour; the collective voices heighten the sense of community while the rap keeps shifting the perspective.

The arrangement moves like a road on which people who set out from different places end up walking in step.

It matters that the song doesn’t offer big solutions.

The fragility of human experience remains.

But it is shared.

> ***“This Thing Called Life” doesn’t explain life to us. Thank heavens. It reminds us of something more useful: whatever it is, none of us is going through it completely alone.***

LISTEN

This Thing Called Life — Ruby Wood feat. Illa J & Abstract Orchestra — is in our playlist Soul Jazz & Velvet Grooves.

Ruby Wood feat. Illa J & Abstract Orchestra. Updated every Friday. Selected by ear.

LISTEN FIRST. SELECT SECOND.