

Seal - Standards (2017)

Written by bluelover (Bogdan Marszałkowski)
Monday, 30 November 2020 12:49 -

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1 *Luck Be A Lady* 4:36 2 *Autumn Leaves* 2:56 3 *I Put A Spell On You* 2:56 4 *They Can't Take That Away From Me* 3:16 5 *Anyone Who Knows What Love Is* 4:32 6 *Love For Sale* 3:46 7 *My Funny Valentine* 4:33 8 *I've Got You Under My Skin* 3:14 9 *Smile* 4:31 10 *I'm Beginning To See The Light* 3:06 11 *It Was A Very Good Year* 4:43 *Bonus Tracks* 12 *The Nearness Of You* 3:53 13 *Let It Snow, Let It Snow, Let It Snow* 2:39 14 *Christmas Song (Chestnuts Roasting)* 3:38 Seal: vocals, guitar Randy Waldman: piano Greg Fields: drums Chuck Berghofer: bass The Puppini Sisters: vocals (10).

Albums of reworked pop and jazz classics released in November bear warnings of creative resignation and commercial opportunism. Seal, however, evidently entered the historic Capitol Studios and United Recording more delighted than a kid in a candy store who just had his braces removed. Going by his liner notes, in which he raves about performing with a 65-piece orchestra, cutting the set, his first for Republic, had an invigorating effect on him. Conducted and arranged by Grammy nominee Chris Walden, *Standards* was recorded with first-rate studio veterans, some of whom worked with Nat King Cole and Frank Sinatra. Seal doesn't waste the grand setting, exhibiting full-effort sincerity, winking charm, and even rare flashes of vivacity at all the right moments, as if this was the album the gravelly tenor was born to make. With the exception of early-'60s selections "It Was a Very Good Year" and "Anyone Who Knows What Love Is" -- the latter coincidentally reworked by Boyz II Men for *Under the Streetlight*, released only a month prior -- all the source material dates from the '30s, '40s, and '50s. The likes of "Luck Be a Lady," "My Funny Valentine," "I've Got You Under My Skin," and "They Can't Take That Away from Me" must be among the songs least in need of new faithful interpretations, but it all plays out with studied finesse. Seal wasn't merely thrown a stack of sheet music and told to crank out the product. It's a treat for fans, as well as the singer, which is part of the appeal.

---Andy Kellman, AllMusic Review

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