



I'm going to let you in on a little secret. Any band that uses a tuba for their bass lines is already halfway into my CD library, whether it's New Orleans funk, Balkan speed brass, or, as in the case of Romashka, Gypsy tunes. Part of a burgeoning NYC Balkan/Gypsy scene, Romashka's self-titled CD is a quick romp (just under 30 minutes) through the Gypsy part of town, with mostly traditional songs. The lack of song notes/lyrics may leave you wondering whether to dance or cry...but why not do both? The sax-led instrumental groove of the original "Shimdiggy" is irresistible, and the beat threatens to spin out of control as you near the end of "La Cîrcuma De La Drum (The Tavern On The Road)." Inna Barmash's voice brings things back to earth, injecting raw emotion and power into every note she sings. In addition to Barmash's voice and Ron Caswell's lip-busting tuba lines, Romashka includes Jake Shulman-Ment (violin), Jeff Perlman (clarinet & sax), Ben Holmes (trumpet), Steven Iancu (accordion), and Timothy Quigley (drums & percussion). Be sure to listen after the last listed track, the raucous "Moldovan Batuta," and you'll be rewarded with a "hidden" reprise of "Tayna" compressed to sound like an old phonograph recording.

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