

Mighty Sam McClain & Knut Reiersrud - Tears of the World (2015)

Written by bluesever

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01. *Tears of the World* (2:54) 02. *Please Mr. Foreman* (2:44) 03. *Jewels* (4:31) 04. *Living in the Key of G* (3:26) 05. *Que Sera Sera* (4:43) 06. *Friends* (5:23) 07. *Too Proud* (5:15) 08. *Apples Don't Fall Far from the Tree* (4:43) 09. *I Wish I Had a Girl Like You* (3:01) 10. *Somebody Help Me* (3:41) 11. *Things Aint What They Used to Be* (3:50) 12. *Promised Land* (5:49) Mighty Sam McClain - Vocals Knut Reiersrud - Guitar, Harmonica, Piano, Vocals (5) Bjørn Holm - Guitar David Wallumrød - Hammond Organ, Wurlitzer Piano & Prophet (5) Nicolai Hængsle Eilertsen - Bass Håkon Kornstad - Saxes & Flute Andreas Bye - Drums Martin Hornrveth - Timpani & Tubular Bells

One of the great Soul preacher who died in June 2015 Mighty Sam McClain, together with Norway's guitar virtuoso Knut Reiersrud. Classics and his own songs. A wild snarling Hammond B3 and other keyboard instruments, razor-sharp or funky gospel drunk acting brass plate, soulful strings and celestial backing singers stood ready beside the floor grooving rhythm section for the arranger of Reiersrud and his bandmates. The guitarist himself also takes time for blues harp and divided in 'Que Sera, Sera' singing with Sam McClain. --- bear-family.com

Mighty Sam McClain suffered a stroke and left this world on June 15th of 2015. He has collaborated with Norwegian guitarist Knut Reiersrud for several years prior to his death. A great supporter of those less fortunate, Sam's legacy with the Give Us Your Poor Project will help them to continue on.

This album was put together just prior to Sam's death and was released in September 2015.

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He and Knut selected the songs which created Sam's final album. It's a damn good one.

The title track starts things off. It's a soulful and hopeful cut where Sam tells us, "Tears of the world keep fallin', oh one day you won't have to cry any more." The organ and bass supplement the guitars and make this a big and cool intro. "Please Mr. Foreman" is an assembly line blues where McClain gives us a very traditional rendition of slow blues in an AAB format. The organ takes us to church a bit as the duo and band give us some cool blues. "Jewels" gives us a down tempo and mournful songs with some poignant harp by Reiersrud. "Living in the Key of G" has Mighty Sam singing to us again about hope in the face of Armageddon. Nice guitar picking and an upbeat tempo are featured here. Can you take a song by Doris Day and turn it into a blues and soul masterpiece? Well, with "Que Sera Sera" Knut and Sam do that! Suffice it to say that the soulful slow blues that they turn it into will make the hair on your arms standup! Knut does the verses and Sam wails on the choruses. Beautiful stuff!

"Friends" offers up a funky mid-tempo beat and Sam testifying to us as few can. And a flute is added for an interesting bit of spice. "Too Proud" brings things down again. June Carter's daughter Carlene wrote this country song; Sam turns it into a minimalistic spiritual of sorts. With "Apples Don't Fall Far from The Tree" takes a bit of a Gospel approach with a big choir behind Sam, although the topic is not Gospel-like. "I Wish I Had a Girl Like You" follows on the same topic of women. Another funky cut with Sam doing his thing. "Somebody Help Me" is a bit of a slow country ballad with thoughtful guitar and vocals. "Things Ain't what They Used to Be" is a full frontal soul and funk assault. The album closes with "Promised Land" with a full scale musical production and a huge intro that turns into a long, slow, mournful soul blues song. The conclusion builds with all the players and church-like bells and then song ends with a big flourish.

The players in addition to Sam and Knut (who does some piano along with harp and occasional vocals) are Bjorn Holm on guitar, David Wallumrod on organ and keys, Nikolai Haengsle Ellertsen on bass, Andreas Bye on drums, Hakon Kornstad on saxes and flute and Martin Horntveth on timani and tubular bells. Strings and backing vocals were also added here and there.

Sadly, we lost Sam as this was in production. Oddly, the tone of he album often seems to be a tribute by Sam to a life passing by. This is a beautiful and well done album. If you are a fan of Sam's you will love this. If you like bluesy soulful stuff this will be right up your alley. If you want to listen to beautifully done songs with emotion and feeling, this needs to be in your CD player. Most highly recommended! ---Steve Jones, bluesblastmagazine.com

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