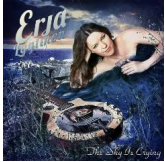


Erja Lyytinen - The Sky Is Crying (2014)

Written by bluesever

Friday, 05 December 2014 16:45 - Last Updated Tuesday, 19 January 2021 09:55

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1. *Person To Person* 2. *Baby Please Set A Date* 3. *It Hurts Me Too* 4. *Erja's Contribution To Jazz* 5. *The Sky Is Crying* 6. *Got To Move* 7. *The King Of The Slide Guitar* 8. *Sho' Nuff I Do* 9. *Something Inside Me* 10. *Hand In Hand* 11. *Dust My Broom (live)* Bass – Roger Innes
Drums – Miri Miettinen Guitar, Backing Vocals – Davide Floreno Lead Vocals, Slide Guitar, Guitar – Erja Lyytinen Percussion – Abdissa Assefa Piano, Electric Organ, Accordion – Harri Taittonen Tenor Saxophone, Baritone Saxophone – Petri Puolitaival Trumpet – Jukka Eskola

Erja is one of the best-known European blues performers with a string of acclaimed studio albums and a live set to her credit since her debut set was released in 2002 – the only real criticism of her that tends to be made is that sometimes she tends to stray too far from the blues roots. There can be no such criticism with this CD though!

Finland's Queen Of The Slide Guitar pays homage to Elmore James, Mississippi's undisputed King Of The Slide Guitar and the results are as compelling as can be expected. Erja takes ten songs closely associated with Elmore and reinterprets them in her own way, though she chose songs she could re-write from a woman's perspective, and Elmore's instrumental 'Elmore's Contribution To Jazz' – a rather inaccurate title for this excellent blues – is reworked into 'Erja's Contribution To Jazz'.

Erja keeps pretty close to the originals on most numbers, though allowing herself free rein on 'Got To Move', and her own number 'King Of The Slide Guitar' certainly goes way beyond anything Elmore might have tried, incorporating subtle flavours of pop, African and Caribbean music, alongside some wonderful slide playing, of course. There are some lovely touches on this set – just little things like the piano on 'Sho Nuff I Do', which is just so 1950s down-home Mississippi.

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Throughout the album, Erja displays an excellent understanding of Elmore's music, but perhaps nowhere more so than on the closing 'Dust My Broom', a live version of the first Elmore James number she heard. It has been a favourite of Erja's ever since and one she invariably includes in her live repertoire. This version follows her lovely, tough cover of 'Hand In Hand' which also nods to Hound Dog Taylor, but 'Broom' is nearly ten minutes of wild slide guitar heaven.

---Norman Darwen, bluesinthenorthwest.com

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