

Erja Lyytinen - Songs From The Road (2012)

Written by bluesever

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01. *The Road Leading Home* — 2:33 02. *Voracious Love* — 4:17 03. *Don't Let A Good Woman Down* — 3:46 04. *Everything's Fine* — 7:22 05. *Grip Of The Blues* — 5:59 06. *Can't Fall In Love* — 4:53 07. *Not A Good Girl* — 12:05 08. *Steamy Windows* — 7:57 09. *No Place Like Home* — 3:13 10. *Crossroads* — 2:06 11. *Scinny Girl* — 6:04 12. *Oil And Water* — 7:27 13. *Soul Of A Man* — 6:56 Erja Lyytinen – vocals, guitar Davide Floreno - guitar Roger Innis - bass Miri Miettinen - drums

Erja Lyytinen's *Songs From The Road* (CD+DVD for the price of one) documents a November 2011 performance at the Savoy Theatre in Helsinki, Finland.

Following acclaimed releases by the late Jeff Healy and American blues legend Luther Allison ("DVD of the Year" at the 2011 Blues Music Awards), the newest entry in Ruf Records' award-winning *Songs from the Road* series comes from Finnish artist Erja Lyytinen. The singer/songwriter/guitarist emerged on the international scene as part of the Pilgrimage project in 2005 and has since become a fixture in clubs and concert halls throughout Europe. Lyytinen's songs skillfully blend slide guitar-driven, down-home blues with elements of rock, pop, jazz and soul.

The two-disc CD/DVD set *Songs from the Road* documents a November 2011 performance at the Savoy Theatre in Helsinki, Finland – the same venue in which Thomas Ruf discovered Lyytinen six years earlier. The concert focuses on material from her 2010 release *Voracious Love* while mixing in a smattering of cuts from previous studio albums. Included are outstanding originals like "Voracious Love" and the hard-driving "Everything's Fine", Blind Willie Johnson's unforgettable "Soul of a Man", a revamped "Crossroads" and Tony Joe White's swamp classic "Steamy Windows".

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But there's a major difference here. Onstage, Erja and fellow musicians Davide Floreno (g), Roger Innis (b) and Miri Miettinen (d) like to expand upon what she has delivered on record. The CD's 13 tracks thus shed new light on Lyytinen's music, showing off more of her ingenuity as a guitarist than any of her studio recordings. Long-time second guitar player Floreno is also a strong presence as he takes turns soloing with the bandleader. (Their successive solos on "Not a Good Girl" are among the show's many highlights). The band as a whole never veers off course. Instead, the four musicians ride the groove, play off one another and take each song to new places.

The DVD – clocking in at over 80 minutes – includes a brief interview and two bonus tracks not found on the CD. The crisp Dolby Digital 5.1 Surround Sound brings out every facet of Lyytinen's voice, from sensuous whisper to toothy shout. Cameras capture the bittersweet emotion of the solo-acoustic "No Place Like Home" and take us along on Erja's crowd walk during "Skinny Girl." She is extraordinarily focused and visibly proud to be playing in front of her hometown audience. Songs from the Road presents a confident and multi-talented performer at the height of her powers. --- bluesmagazine.nl

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