

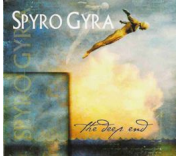
## Spyro Gyra - The Deep End (2004)

Written by bluesever

Thursday, 11 March 2010 11:09 - Last Updated Sunday, 10 May 2015 12:30

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## Spyro Gyra - The Deep End (2004)



1. *Summer Fling*
2. *East Lake Shuffle*
3. *Monsoon*
4. *As You Wish*
5. *Soburg Jam*
6. *Crossing, The*
7. *Wiggle Room*
8. *Wind Warriors*
9. *In Your Arms*
10. *Chippewa Street*
11. *Beyond The Rain*

Julio Fernandez (vocals, guitar);

Jay Beckenstein (saxophone);

Scott Ambush (bass instrument).

Don Harris (trumpet);

Dave Samuels (vibraphone);

Joel Rosenblatt, Billy Kilson, Ludwig Afonso (drums);

Daniel Sadowick, David Charles, Cyro Baptista (percussion).

With their third label release, the longtime contemporary jazz powerhouse ensemble led by fluid and funky sax legend Jay Beckenstein celebrates 30 years of a consistent mix of making instrumental pop hits and pushing the musical envelopes into fusion territory. The title promises a plunge into something deep, or at least a little stretching, and the band -- showcasing new drummer Ludwig Alfonso on a few tunes -- more than delivers. But not right away. They open smooth and light-funky with the playful, sax-driven "Summer Fling," which is breezy and fun but only digs deep with Tom Schuman's heavily retro key solo. "Eastlake Shuffle" balances Beckenstein's adventurous sax punch with a heavy blues mood driven by Schuman and the

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rockin' guitar harmonies and solo of Julio Fernandez. Things don't really heat up until the exotic fusion jam "Monsoon," a live show crowd-pleaser that builds from an Indian-flavored meditation (complete with distant chance and bird calls) into a moody sitar-laced melody before exploding into a powerful, blues-drenched extravaganza featuring some of Beckenstein's most powerful lines blended with Fernandez's brimming, ready-to-explode guitar on the hook. From this point, the band alternates its light moods ("As You Wish") with more aggressive and sometimes blistering rock-flavored explorations ("Joburg Jam," one of the four tracks featuring the shimmering vibes action of Dave Samuels, "Wiggle Room"). Most veteran bands would gasp for survival in the culture of stricter radio formats by playing it ever safer and trendy, but Spyro Gyra has never been most bands. Each release has a few sweet pleasantries (and even these feature magnificent musicianship) but a great deal more energy and blowing than today's average smooth jazz listener is used to. It's worth the plunge. ---Jonathan Widran, Rovi

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