

Emilia Mitiku - I Belong To You (2013)

Written by bluesever

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1. *So Wonderful* 2. *Lost Inside* 3. *I Belong to You* 4. *Ooh La La* 5. *Zou Bisou Bisou* (English) 6. *You're Not Right for Me* 7. *Dream a Little Dream* 8. *Officially a Fool* 9. *Again* 10. *You're Breaking My Heart* (feat. Klaus Doldinger) 11. *Winter Beach* 12. *Substitute Arms* (feat. Till Brönner) 13. *Witchcraft* 14. *Forgive Me* (feat. Magnus Lindgren)

Back in 1998, Swedish singer Emilia scored a Top 5 hit with *Big Big World*, a catchy pop song that sounded a bit like a Disney ballad. But a follow-up single failed to crack the top 40, and British music fans never heard from her again... until now. Emilia has returned with a surname, which turns out to be Mitiku, and a completely different sound. She calls *I Belong to You* a "vintage pop" record, inspired by music from the 30s, 40s and 50s. At first, this looks like a tricky makeover for a singer weaned on Sweden's 90s pop scene. And actually, it's an opposite move to one of her contemporaries from the time. After a lengthy absence, Robyn returned to the UK charts as a forward-thinking electro act. Emilia has turned the other way and gone retro. But from the album's first track, it's clear this music suits Mitiku. A visit to YouTube confirms she's the same girl who sang *Big Big World*, but her voice has ripened over the years. It's a versatile instrument, allowing Mitiku to mix up those "vintage pop" sounds across the album. *Ooh La La* is a jaunty jazz shimmy, there's bossa nova on *Winter Beach*, and *You're Not Right for Me* could almost pass for an old Dolly Parton single. Perhaps most impressively, Mitiku keeps a straight face while covering *Zou Bisou Bisou*, the French pop song that left Don Draper so unimpressed during series five of *Mad Men*. Sadly, not everything is quite as successful. A cover of *Dream a Little Dream* is pleasant but pointless, while some of Mitiku's originals are as bland and forgettable as their titles: *So Wonderful*, *I Belong to You*, *Lost Inside*. Her own songwriting is better when she ditches the mushy stuff for edgier themes. *Substitute Arms* is a classy take on the old *Mr Right/Mr Right Now* idea, and *You're Breaking My Heart* offers a neat metaphor for what some guys are after: "You didn't want fulfilling / Just a piece of cake." Both suggest Emilia did some living in that big big world while she was away. --- Nick Levine, BBC Review

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