Electric Sun - Earthquake (1979)

A1 Electric Sun 5:20 A2 Lilac 2:46 A3 Burning Wheels Turning 6:38 A4 Japanese Dream 4:26 B1 Sundown 4:03 B2 Winterdays 1:26 B3 Still So Many Lives Away 4:39 B4 Earthquake 10:36 Bass – Ule Ritgen Drums – Clive Edwards Vocals, Guitar – Ulrich Roth

After his none-too-pleasant exit from German hard rock icons the Scorpions, guitar wizard Uli Jon Roth launched the next phase of his career via 1979's Earthquake album, which was released through his ostensible solo project, Electric Sun -- a psychedelic power trio fashioned in the image of his idol Jimi Hendrix's Experience. Unfortunately, Electric Sun's hippie tendencies were already severely outdated by this time, and with Roth handling the singing despite his obvious technical limitations (even with the Scorpions, he frequently insisted on sharing lead vocals with true frontman Klaus Meine), the project was probably doomed to commercial failure from the start. Indeed, no matter how categorically dazzling his guitar-playing skills, Roth's incompetence as a singer transformed Earthquake into the sort of album that made his loyal fans want to pull their hair out in frustration. On the one hand, here was the glory of Roth's guitar work, with its effortlessly fluid melodic lines, unexpected twists of the imagination, astounding improvisations, complete control of tone and texture, and not a single note wasted in the bargain; on the other, there was Uli's nasal and unruly voice, rambling on about painfully archaic flower-child subjects, with no help from his heavy German accent. And perhaps even stranger, nestled in alongside epic workouts like "Burning Wheels Turning" and the neo-classical tour de force of a title track, other songs simply found Roth and company reinterpreting his brighter moments with the Scorpions -- e.g., opener "Electric Sun," which was a pretty straightforward reworking of "Polar Nights" with altered lyrics, while "Lilac" clearly aped the midsection of "Fly to the Rainbow." All this being said, it's still impossible to recommend against Earthquake where pure guitar shredding nirvana is concerned; Uli Jon Roth's vocals may produce a certain amount of discomfort, but his jaw-dropping six-string heroics will have loyalists convulsing with delight. ---Eduardo Rivadavia, AllMusic Review

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