

The London Souls – The London Souls (2011)

Written by bluesever

Monday, 12 September 2011 11:40 - Last Updated Thursday, 08 April 2021 19:58

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01 – Intro 02 – *She's So Mad* 03 – *Someday* 04 – *She's In Control* 05 – *Future Life* 06 – *Old Country Road* [play](#) 07 – *Six Feet* 08 – *Stand Up* 09 – *Easier Said Than Done* 10 – *I Think I Like It* [play](#) 11 – *Dizzy* 12 – *Under Control* 13 – *The Sound*
Tash Neal - Guitar/Vocals Kiyoshi Matsuyama - Bass/Vocals Christ Saint - Drums/Vocals

The London Souls' self-titled debut album builds on roaring chords and flashy solos on guitar, insistent drumming and straight-ahead vocals.

The power trio is a rock tradition: the Jimi Hendrix Experience and Cream in the late 1960s, Rush and Motörhead in the '70s, and Nirvana, Green Day and Gov't Mule in the '90s, among others. Include quartets with a power-trio lineup of guitar, drum and bass at the core, and Black Sabbath, Led Zeppelin and the Who join the list. The latest addition is the London Souls, a group based here. The trio's self-titled debut disc, on the Soul on 10 label, arrived this week.

The London Souls play with authority and intuition, and the new album reveals how well the group understands the power-trio format. Chris St. Hilaire is busy but never overbearing—to keep things moving while his drums rumble, he lets the ride cymbal sizzle and adds taut figures on the hi-hat. Bassist Kiyoshi Matsuyama fulfills his responsibilities at the bottom, emerging now and then with a run to the instrument's midrange. On guitar, Tash Neal is a fluid and aggressive soloist who knows when to underplay. Nine of the 13 tracks were cut live at Abbey Road Studios in London, made famous in rock circles by the Beatles, and they give a sense of how well the band communicates—Mr. Neal called it "telepathy."

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The trio emerged from a series of larger bands that played here in 2005, with the current lineup coming together three years later. The name the London Souls, by the way, is a tribute to the power groups like Cream, the Hendrix band, the Who and Zeppelin that were based in the British capital, as well as a nod toward Mr. St. Hilaire's father, who was in a band with the same name in the mid-'60s. Residencies at small clubs in Brooklyn and on Manhattan's Lower East Side gave the trio a chance to develop its arrangements. Above all else, the London Souls discovered that a successful power trio relies on a savvy sense of dynamics. ---Jim Fusilli, wsj.com

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