

Tinsley Ellis - Red Clay Soul (2016)

Written by bluesever
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1. All I Think About (4:00) 2. Givin' You Up (5:14) 3. Callin' (3:54) 4. Anything But Go (3:36)
5. Hungry Woman Blues (4:26) 6. Circuit Rider (4:26) 7. Don't Cut It (3:17) 8. Party Of One (4:37) 9. Estero Noche (3:59) 10. The Bottle, The Book Or The Gun (4:48) Tinsley Ellis – guitar, vocals Kevin McKendree – keyboards Steve Mackey – bass Lynn Williams – drums + Oliver Wood – guitar, vocals

Tinsley Ellis gives us an album filled with tracks that are reminiscent of the characteristic southern soul sound of many southern artists. Digging back to the roots of the soul sound of Ray Charles and Otis Redding and hailing from Georgia, Ellis' title of his latest release makes perfect sense, Red Clay Soul.

There are plenty of mildly rocking tracks like "All I Think About Is You" and the song written with Oliver Wood of the Wood Brothers, "Givin' You Up," which is probably the track that is the most accessible to everyone. There just is not as much of the blues rocker that we are familiar with in his earlier albums like Fire It Up. There is still plenty to enjoy here, though, because Ellis does plenty of wonderfully expressive guitar work on some of the slower more emotionally deep tracks. The atmospheric slow blues of "Hungry Woman Blues" is an excellent example with the lines "you took my car and money too. I'm at the end of my rope ... baby you took my rope, too" is just the type of lyrical mastery that his gritty voice is perfect for as he expresses the vulnerability of having his heart broken.

The rock output gets ramped up a little with "Don't Cut It." He really does some evocative string stretching as he channels a Latin vibe in the beautiful instrumental of "Estero Noche." Meanwhile, the standout track of this album though is the closer "The Bottle, The Book, or The Gun." Filled with some sparse picking in the solo his control of phrasing and melody are superb as he expresses the frustration of an alcoholic hitting bottom after waking up in an unknown

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place every morning after a bout with the bottle to ward off the loneliness of life on the road.

After 40 years as a musician touring the world, Tinsley pays tribute to the Southern soul sound and digs deep and delivers some superb emotionally cathartic tracks. The raw sound of being recorded live in the studio makes the mastery of Ellis' guitar work all the more impressive.

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