

Erja Lyytinen - Forbidden Fruit (2013)

Written by bluesever

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1 Joyful Misery 4:27 2 Hold On Together 3:54 3 At Least We Still Fight 3:40 4 Forbidden Fruit 5:30 5 Death Letter 4:37 6 Change of Season 7:39 7 Jealousy 3:58 8 Press My Button 4:23 9 Things Ablout Coming My Way 4:42 Erja Lyytinen - lead acoustic, electric , slide guitars, vocals, keys Davide Floreno – acoustic, electric guitars, backup vocals Roger Innis - bass Miri Mietinnen – drums, percussion, backup-vocals Hari Taittonen - keys, Hammond, piano

'Forbidden Fruit' finds Finnish slide guitarist Erja Lyytinen taking the blues into the new territories, by delving into the personal realm to explore previously untapped musical ambitions. From the deeply felt lyrics and well crafted songs to the emotional input of her solos and expansive band harmonies, 'Forbidden Fruit' embodies the essence of everything we identify as the blues.

The lead track 'Joyful Misery' for example, is a superb co-write with Bonnie Raitt song writer Alan Darby. It has a lovely understated groove and a catchy melody, with great harmonies, a strong hook and an aching solo. It's also a very radio friendly song as befits most of the album.

'Forbidden Fruit' is a multi layered affair. Peel away a layer and you will find another rich seam of lyrical meaning and intricate guitar parts. The heart felt lyrics, deep guitar tones and sonic textures are all glued together by Erja own natural vivacity.

'Forbidden Fruit' may not have the immediacy of some of her previous albums, but on this CD she draws from a deeper well, infusing old blues traditions – the art of story telling and sexual double entendre's – with contemporary musical values and guitar solo's that evoke lyrical

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meaning.

For every well crafted turn of phrase there's an intricate guitar part to match, ranging from co-producer Davide Floreno's tremolo guitar figure on 'Joyful Misery' to the slide-led, wall of sound on 'Jealousy'. The radical arrangement and unusual chord structure of 'Death Letter' re-invigorates the blues standard and helps integrate it into the album's sequential flow. The Lyytinen/Floreno co-write 'Change Of Season' is also a lovely ballad with a smouldering arrangement, resonant solo and one of Erja's very best vocal performances.

The poignant 'Joyful Misery' is inspired by a 50 year relationship between her uncle and aunt, while the title track pulls no lyrical punches; - 'A flower in blossom attracts all kind of bees' – before she belatedly offers us a cathartic release with Lil Johnson's 'Press My Button'.

'Forbidden Fruit' avoids the usual clichés and as a result might be considered a slow burner, but the songs are rooted in real substance and the playing is a delight. Contemporary blues never sounded more essential. --- getreadytorock.me.uk

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