

Queen Esther - The Other Side (2014)

Written by bluesever (Bogdan Marszałkowski)
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1 Sunnyland 2:51 2 I've Come Undone Again 5:06 3 Jet Airliner 5:00 4 Oh, Sun 4:02 5 Sadness Everlasting 4:44 6 Somebody Else's Baby 4:37 7 Will You Or Won't You 2:56 8 My Big Iron Skillet 2:09 9 The Other Side 3:58 10 Love Is A Wrecking Ball 3:03 11 I Feel Like Going Home 5:00 12 Jet Airliner (The Black Americana Version) 5:00 13 I've Come Undone Again (Otra Vez) 3:59 Acoustic Guitar – Bruce Edwards (tracks: 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9) Acoustic Guitar, Lead Guitar, Rhythm Guitar – Jon Diaz (tracks: 1, 3, 8, 10, 12, 13) Bass – Naisha Walton Drums – Sir G. Earl Grice Electric Guitar – Michael Duhnfort (tracks: 12) Harmony Vocals – Queen Esther (tracks: 2, 5, 8) Lap Steel Guitar – Raphael McGregor (tracks: 5, 10) Lead Guitar, Rhythm Guitar – Marvin Sewell (tracks: 1, 3, 6, 12), Ronald "Head" Drayton (tracks: 1, 6) Lead Vocals – Queen Esther Pedal Steel Guitar – Bob Hoffnar (tracks: 4, 7) Piano, Harmony Vocals – Jon Loyd (tracks: 7, 9, 11) Rhythm Guitar, Harmony Vocals – Ralph M. White III (tracks: 3, 4) Violin – Charles Burnham (tracks: 7, 9)

Secrets do have a way of leaking out, and one that desperately needs to be heard is Americana/country/ jazz singer, Queen Esther. The very talented songwriter has a superb old school soulful voice, which years ago would probably have taken her high into the charts. Queen Esther began her career in 2004 with Talkin' Fishbowl Blues, a neat mix of blues and country, which ended with an interesting version of Tammy Wynette's classic Stand By Your Man. In 2010 Queen Esther climbed on another horse, jazz, which resulted in another fine CD, What Is Love? Now we have Queen Esther's most country album, The Other Side, which contains some stunning traditional country, a dash of country/blues and some well selected cover versions. Every song is sung with passion and fire, by this underrated female singer who should be a musical giant.

Opening delight, Sunnyland, begins as an acoustic country/blues song, but then becomes more upbeat as the electric guitar bursts in. Queen Esther's wonderful vocal has hints of her gospel and church roots in the south of the USA. The country tracks start with the incredible heartbreaker, I've Come Undone Again, an original song. Queen Esther's vocal and her

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songwriting skills on this track indicate strongly that this is where she should be. The CD's best country song is touched with old school genius; Sadness Everlasting would have been perfect for George Jones. Queen Esther's knowing vocal, which has a touch of sadness, is perfection, with a superb steel guitar solo as well. For me, this track is one of the best traditional country songs of the decade so far. Not far behind it is another traditional gem, Somebody Else's Baby, which would have been a good song for Connie Smith to tackle.

Queen Esther's amazing CD includes several cover versions, all of them high quality songs. The Steve Miller Band's 1977 hit, Jet Airliner, which was originally written in 1973 by Paul Pena, emerges as a blazing blues/rock song. Queen Esther attacks this foot-tapper with great gusto. The Queen also does a strong version of Wanda Jackson's My Big Iron Skillet, which dates back to 1969. Heard in 2014 the song sounds almost like a feminist anthem, with Queen Esther sounding like she understands the dark drama of this underrated track.

Other highlights are the country/gospel of The Other Side, and the acoustic country/blues song Love Is A Wrecking Ball. The album winds down beautifully with a killer version of the old Charlie Rich song I Feel Like Going Home. It's a brave singer, who tackles one of Charlie Rich's most perfect songs, but the new version also hits the target, with Queen Esther's passionate vocal set to move anyone who hears it. The simple piano backing track, with Queen Esther's emotional vocal is a dream end to a disc which has no faults.

So the secret is out, Queen Esther is a major talent in several area's, but her greatest talent is as a writer and singer of the more traditional country song. Hopefully this is the road she is planning to travel down for many years. The Other Side is a major work, by a vital, important artist who has been ignored for too long, hopefully now is Queen Esther time. ---Paul Riley, 1queenesther.livejournal.com

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