

Bert Kaempfert Orchestra - Bye Bye Blues & To The Good Life (1999)

Written by bluesever

Thursday, 20 March 2014 16:55 - Last Updated Thursday, 20 March 2014 16:59

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01. Bye Bye Blues [02:55] 02. Remember When [03:00] 03. When You're Smiling [02:47] 04. Tahitian Sunset [02:31] 05. Once In A While [03:11] 06. Steady Does It [03:12] 07. It Makes No Difference [03:14] 08. You Stepped Out Of A Dream [03:05] 09. Wiederseh'n [02:51] 10. I'm Beginnind To See The Light [03:05] 11. Melina [03:07] 12. Out Of Nowhere [03:12] 13. Take The A Train [03:13] 14. The Sunny Side Of Life [03:13] 15. My Melancholy Baby [02:54] 16. Time To Dream [02:48] 17. What Is This Thing Called Love [02:40] 18. Lover's Wonderland [03:38] 19. Wheeling Free [03:22] 20. The Good Life [02:19] 21. Berts Bossa No.2 [03:12] 22. Skyliner [03:13] 23. Manhatten Merengue [02:49] 24. Honeysuckle Rose [03:17]

Bert Kaempfert was coasting at the peak of his popularity when he released Bye Bye Blues in early 1966. Perhaps that's the reason why he decided not to change his formula at all on this breezy collection of standards, originals, and contemporary tunes. The title is no joke: this is a sunny album without a care in the world, lightly swinging to its own beat. Kaempfert's big, brassy arrangements are appealing but a little similar, which means that the entire record kind of blends together; there's no beginning or end, just 12 easy listening tunes that flow into the next. That means, naturally, that nothing -- not even hit singles like the title track -- stands out, which logically means that this isn't one of the more distinctive albums in his canon.

Nevertheless, Bye Bye Blues is a pleasant album, ideal for background cocktail music, which is all that Kaempfert fans old or young will want anyway. [Ironically, the seven bonus tracks that were added to the end of the album on Taragon's 1999 reissue had a more distinctive sound than anything on the record itself, ranging from sharper swing to choral-laden, syrupy ballads. Among the bonus tracks were five previously unreleased cuts, including "Sweet Romance" (which was originally released on a single as "Love for Love"), and the original LP version of "Monte Carlo," which was originally on The Magic Music of Far Away Places. Taragon's CD reissue of that title includes a previously unreleased alternate take of "Monte Carlo." --- Stephen Thomas Erlewine, Rovi

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