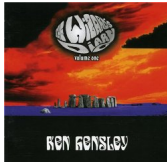


Ken Hensley - The Wizard`s Diary Volume One (2005)

Written by bluesever

Tuesday, 03 January 2017 13:43 - Last Updated Sunday, 27 May 2018 21:33

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1. *The Wizard* (3:03) Hensley/Clarke 2. *Illusion* (5:05) Hensley 3. *Circle Of Hands* (6:22) Hensley 4. *Rain* (3:44) Hensley 5. *Weep In Silence* (5:24) Hensley/Wetton 6. *Feelings* (4:41) Hensley 7. *Sweet Freedom* (6:43) Hensley 8. *Lady In Black* (8:00) Hensley 9. *Free Me* (4:11) Hensley 10. *July Morning* (8:30) Hensley/Byron 11. *Stealin'* (8:21) Hensley 12. *Easy Livin'* (2:31) Hensley
Ken Hensley - lead and harmony vocals, electric, slide & acoustic guitars, organ, piano, Minimoog and other synthesizers, tambourine, cowbell Andrey Shatunovsky - drums Alexey Ostashov - bass guitar Vadim Nazarov - acoustic and electric piano Igor Kozhin - electric guitar Irina Rodilez, Oleg Kozura, Raisa Saed-Shakh, Andrey Kolchugin - backing vocals

URIAH HEEP had been one of my favourite bands since I was a kid and even before knowing what Prog is, so the day I bought "Demons & Wizards" got pretty sad, being that with Byron and Thain dead, there was no chance of getting more material from the golden era of this fantastic band.

Some weeks ago a friend came from London with KEN HENSLEY'S "The Wizards Diary" as a gift, I thanked her, lest the album in a drawer and we went to eat something and have a drink, after years of HEEP albums I didn't care about, forgot about it.

But a few days ago opened the drawer, read the song list and got interested, so took the CD to the car and went to work while playing it.....What a pleasant surprise!, fresh new versions of old HEEP classics....What else could I ask.

The first real surprise is in the vocals, Ken does an outstanding job (being he's not really a

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vocalist), if we add that he's impeccable with the keyboards and specially with the good old Hammond (in which he's the real wizard), the guy is one of the classic era musicians who hasn't lost the touch.

It's almost impossible to recreate the magical sound of the band during the best years, the addition of competent Russian musicians and Russia's Presidential Symphony Orchestra in several tracks makes a good substitute.

"The Wizards Diary" is a great album from start to end, but as usual there are some tracks that impressed me more. For example "Sweet Freedom" where he tortures the Hammond to the point of making it bleed magical sounds, and that's not all Mister Igor (Nice to meet you) Kozhin makes a fantastic guitar performance to complement the band.

Even when he's not Byron, the orchestral version of the famous epic "July Morning" is out of this world but the greatest surprise is "The Wizard" (One of my less favourite tracks) that sounds even better than it originally did.

If there's something I always loved of Easy Livin' is the vocal work, and believe me, this version has almost nothing to envy from the original, even the chorus (One of the strongest features of URIAH HEEP) are very solid, and the organ in the back is the cherry on the top of the pie. ./

On this case I won't review all the tracks as I usually do because they are well known, but even the ones I don't mention are pretty good, I can honestly say there's not a weak moment.

This is an album ideal for old Heepers like me, who want to recreate magical moments of the youth but at the same time listen music that sounds fresh; and also for new generations who will have the chance to listen material that doesn't sound like "retro Prog" (A term vastly used but which I dislike).

Would love to give a perfect rating to "The Wizards Diary", but despite the different an fresh sound, URIAH HEEP songs can only be perfect when played by URIAH HEEP, so four stars is OK for me. --- Ivan_Melgar_M, progarchives.com

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