

PRESSETEXT

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MEENA & THE CHRIS FILLMORE BAND
ELeVatlonS
Continental Blue Heaven CD/LP
Release: Oktober 2019

WHAT A DEBUT!!

Debut? Meena Cryle and The Chris Fillmore Band already have some formidable recordings, undeniably! But yet, ELeVatlonS is something of a debut album for this very talented band .

For the first time they had complete control of their Americana paths... no producers, no label-boss etc., just pure Meena ,Chris and band consisting of Söa Fitzpatrick on keyboards, Alex Trier on bass, Robert Schoblocher and Bernhard Egger on drums...Also some very fine studio guests who have long standing connections with the band, and this genre of music. Hans Theessink with his mandolin, Angus "Bangus" Thomas on bass, Bernhard Rabitsch on trumpet, Wolfgang Staribacher on Organ & Wurlitzer, Rainer Baumgartner on the congas, Frank Cortez on percussion, and Martina "Harpina" Defant on harmonica, all good friends!!

If you look at the cover before listening, it reveals the Americana music in a wide variety of colours and sounds, belying the nationality of the band members. Southern Rock, Gospel, Soul, Blues, and some country and ballads, all VERY atmospheric. Gripping, sensitive and touching, a road movie that you wish would never end...

Anyone who is able to enter into such an intense musical relationship with one another, raises the presumption that they have already experienced something together . Indeed, Meena and Chris who were 16 years old when they first met saw their musical tastes were similar and decided to form a band. The expressive, versatile singer, also very competent on guitar, and the gifted guitarist, whose dreamlike touch enthralls every time.

Legendary Grammy winning producer Jim Gaines could not escape the fascination of the Meena Cryle and Chris Fillmore Band...."She has the voice, she has the passion" was his unerring judgement...If anyone should know, he should, with Santana, Stevie Ray Vaughan, Miles Davis and Van Morrison on his customer list! The song writing team of Cryle/Fillmore are in a league above others, hence 7 of the 10 tracks were penned by them.

With "I Wanna Know" irresistibly abducted to the Mexican border, Willy DeVille puts a joyful grin on his face and reminisces Bob Dylans blissful Pat Garrett and Billy the Kid times. "Way Down" turns out to be a broadly orchestrated, intense ballad that would have been a highlight at wall-of-sound times. The thrusting Blues 'n' Boogie gets it's own way with "Sweet Loving Mama", Lord Have Mercy (Revised) pays tribute to the great John Lee Hooker in a manner that flows directly from the Delta into the world with emotional depth and authentic heart drives. Clarksdale just around the corner!! Balladesk on the piano starts "I Got You" , before drifting into pumping rock and proving once again how convincingly grounded Meena, Chris and the band are in these climes, with neighbors like Bob Seger.

Similarly designed, "Shine on You" with varied and forward-storming pendulum guitar runs by Chris Fillmore. It would not be Meena Cryle however, if she did not wear her signature timbre in soulful parts as well.Accordingly, "It's ok" greets Beale Street. All this will be complimented by three cover versions starting with Toy Caldwell's southern Rock classic "Can't You See" from the debut album of The Marshall Tucker Band, the Meena Cryle and Chris Fillmore Band with a highly dressed country rock and gospel sound.

Eric Bibb is the writer responsible for the socially unmistakable "In My Fathers House", the Cryle/Fillmore version is an earthy rock song interspersed with mysterious "space effects" from Chris Fillmore. No less mysterious, Danny O'Keefes/Bob Dylans "Well Well Well" snakes out of a misty Bayou.

Recorded this time in Sound Fux Studio, Bavaria, the Recording Engineer was Winston Jud, additional recordings are contributed to Frank Cortez.

The chairs of the production team, as previously mentioned, were taken by Meena and Chris themselves. Had this not been the case, ELeVatlonS would probably not have been so powerful and compact - A VERY WISE DECISION! - Dietmar Hoscher