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Ghia – This Is

Let's get it straight: „This is“ is THE album by Ghia. It catches the band at its peak and features 10 songs, including not only their impeccable hit, „What's Your Voodoo?“ but a full arsenal of yet unheard, timeless, and soulful music without equal. The songs on the album, which were recorded between 1988 and 1991, could be considered forerunners of the downtempo genre, with one foot in the late 1980s street soul direction but sparkling with touches of synth pop and contemporary jazz-funk. Genre limitations aside, all that Ghia ever wanted to do was create music—good music—and you will hear this in the depth of the compositions.

When Ghia expanded from the dynamic duo of composers Lutz Boberg and Frank Simon to a trio with singer Lisa Ohm, it was meant to be something special. While Boberg and Simon had worked with different singers before, it was Lisa who set a new benchmark with her clear and powerful voice. Ohm had already been active as a professional musician since the 1970s and was connected with bands from the infamous Schneeball collective. While recording with Ghia at the Cottage studio, she could also be heard as the key background singer on many Georgie Red and George Kochbeck productions.

The album starts with „Keep Your House In Disorder,“ which has yet again become another classic song from the band's catalog since it was featured as the B-side of the „What's Your Voodoo?“ reissue. The song is about a relationship in which the woman has trouble adapting to her boyfriend's turn in life. He tells her to „keep your house in disorder,“ meaning don't take things too seriously, don't stand still, and you will do better to take the sideroads in life.

„This Is“ continues with the downtempo numbers „Crystal Silence“ and „Close to You.“ Both are deep, one-of-a-kind, and previously unissued street soul ballads. On these two tracks, you can still hear the band's roots in jazz-funk. Hence, as a follower of the band's output may have yet recognized, instrumentals of these two tracks can be found on their first LP, „Curaçao Blue.“ In fact, „Close to You“ was one of the band's first compositions. Earlier recordings of the song exist with different singers and different vocals, but it wasn't perfect until Lisa laid down the final version and a choir was added. It's difficult for us to recall any late-80s soul tune as beautiful and intriguing as this one. The final section, which begins with „so much baby we can say,“ sounds ahead of its time, reminiscent of mid-90s contemporary R&B.

Next up is „Eskimo,“ an equally brilliant and soulful downtempo composition,



Artist: Ghia
Title: This Is
Label: The Outer Edge
Cat.Nr.: TAC-015
Format: LP / Digital
Digital Release: April 7, 2023
Vinyl Release: April 7, 2023
EAN: 4251804139625
File Under: Downtempo/Street Soul

Tracklist:

Keep Your House In Disorder
Crystal Silence
Close To You
Eskimo
What's Your Voodoo
Angel On Your Shoulder
You Won't Sleep On My Pillow
L O M E (List Of Missing Elements)
I Haven't Got The Power
What's Your Voodoo (Dark Spirits Mix)

more info about artist and label:

<https://theouteredge.bandcamp.com/>
<https://www.instagram.com/the.outer.edge>
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<https://www.soundcloud.com/theouteredge>



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but with more focus on synth sounds than the previous tracks. Once more, it showcases the creative lyricism of the song writers, Boberg and Simon, imagining a train ride during a rainy and cold night: „feeling like an Eskimo in an igloo in New York.“

Eskimo leads to the aforementioned classic, „What’s Your Voodoo?“ Originally released in 1991 on the small Mikado label, it was reissued on our label in 2019. We already called this „one of the most wonderful and mystic slow motion synth pop tunes ever recorded“—and we still mean it! Let’s face it: this was done before British bands like Massive Attack, Tricky, and Portishead laid the foundation of trip-hop. Dare we call Ghia’s music „proto trip-hop“? As a special bonus, the digital version of the LP features a previously unreleased mix of the song, which includes added samples; this should clarify how close Ghia actually was to the sound of the mid-’90s. Here it should be mentioned that their unique tone didn’t come out of nowhere. At the time, composer and guitarist Simon was building his own effects processors to generate the sounds he had in mind. The keyboards and guitars on „What’s Your Voodoo?“ were passed through a unique, privately built processor. Combined with a deep synth bassline and the exceptional haunting vocals by Lisa Ohm, it gives the track all the magic the title implies.

But this isn’t yet where the story ends. „Angel On Your Shoulder“ and „L O M E“ are two more completely unissued and great tracks from the band’s shelved works. Being a bit more uptempo than the rest of the album, they fall between contemporary soul/R&B and synthesized pop music. And of course, another downtempo hit needed to be featured on the album: „You Won’t Sleep on My Pillow.“ It was the original A-side of their single release in 1991, and since then it has been featured on various compilations.

The album concludes with a really strong ballad entitled „I Haven’t Got The Power.“ Here we hear only pianist and keyboardist Lutz Boberg with Lisa Ohm, without further instrumentation. Basically recorded in a live session, this showcases once more the talent and ingenuity within the Ghia project.

Whether you agree or not, „This is“ may easily be considered one of the best German late 80s/early 90s soul pop and downtempo albums ever recorded. Cautiously, it may even be submitted as the missing link between mid/late 80s soul by bands such as Sade, and later trip-hop groups like Massive Attack. Let us celebrate Ghia and their music, which had been shelved for more than 30 years but has now finally been released on The Outer Edge.

more info about artist and label:

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