

## Erja Lyytinen - Stolen Hearts (2017)

Written by bluesever

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1. *Stolen Hearts* (4:41) 2. *Rocking Chair* (3:48) 3. *Love Laboratory* (4:12) 4. *24 Angels* (3:55) 5. *Black Ocean* (7:13) 6. *Slowly Burning* (4:15) 7. *Lover's Novels* (3:30) 8. *Silver Stones* (4:44) 9. *Awakening* (3:59) 10. *City Of Angels* (5:20) 11. *Broken Eyes* (4:55) Bass – Juha Verona Drums – Kai Jokiahho Drums, Percussion – Miri Miettinen Guitar – Davide Floreno Keyboards, Organ [Hammond], Piano – Harri Taittonen Vocals, Guitar – Erja Lyytinen

The chances are that you if you're aware of Erja Lyytinen, you consider her a blues artist in the most familiar sense. It's a perfectly excusable assumption. The petite bottleneck guitarist has spent 15 years involved in a gradual but steady ascent of the ladder of the European blues market, her most recent studio record, 2014's 'The Sky Is Crying' being an homage to a childhood hero, the late Elmore James.

Since then the lady that the Blues magazine refers to as "the Finnish slide goddess" has given birth to twins, undergone changes in her personal and professional lives and emerged with a fresh, re-energised attitude.

Seven albums into her career 'Stolen Hearts' reveals a new facet of Lyytinen's artistic persona. In the past she has integrated elements of both hard rock and pop into her music. This time out, encouraged by her producer, Erja now flings the doors wide open to express what she describes as: "heartbreak, frustration, disappointment, fear of loss and yet, at the same time, the deepest love."

With the exception of long-standing guitarist Davide Floreno, Lyytinen worked with a new group

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of musicians in Helsinki during the summer of 2016 and then proceeded to step even further outside of her comfort zone when multi-platinum selling engineer and producer Chris Kimsey agreed to participate in the sessions. Kimsey is best known for having worked on many of the biggest selling albums by The Rolling Stones but his CV also includes the likes of Led Zeppelin, Peter Frampton, Marillion, The Quireboys and The Psychedelic Furs among many others. Lyytinen was thrilled to fly to London to record her lead vocal tracks and then sit back and watch as the Englishman mixed the results at a studio called The State Of The Ark, equipped with a desk once owned by EMI. In fact,

‘Stolen Hearts’ was mixed on said console – the same one that Kimsey had often used with the Stones. “Chris said that it was like meeting an old girlfriend after many years,” recalls Erja. “He sat in front of the desk and his magic started to happen.”

Of course it would be misleading and foolish to describe ‘Stolen Hearts’ as a complete reinvention for Erja Lyytinen. The self-descriptively named ‘Slowly Burning’ is a languid, melodic slice of fruity blues-rock.

However, its hook-laden and decided funky title cut is something different altogether, and it’s easy to appreciate why Kimsey fell in love with ‘Black Ocean’, a cool slice of 1970s-influenced rock built upon a strident, sassy riff and garnished with one of Lyytinen’s finest guitar solos to date. And let’s not forget closing number Broken Eyes, noteworthy for its stripped-back feel and a formidable, emotional vocal display. “I felt that I had the ingredients to make something extraordinary and different,” says the little lady. And you know what? She was right. ---  
erjalyytinen.com

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