

Viktoria Tolstoy - My Swedish Heart (2005)

Written by bluesever
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1. *Grandmas Song* 4:08 2. *Mind If I* 4:30 3. *From Above* 4:30 4. *Dialogue* 3:11 5. *You Gave Me The Flow* 4:23 6. *Den Första Gang* 4:37 7. *Dannys Dreaming* 4:21 8. *The Morning Of You* 3:24 9. *Mayday* 3:45 10. *I Hope It's Spring For You* 4:41 11. *Jag Yet En Dejlilig Rosa* 4:55
Viktoria Tolstoy – vocals Jacob Karlzon – piano Ulf Wakenius – guitar Lars Danielsson – bass, cello Christian Spering – bass Peter Danemo – drums, percussion

Viktoria Tolstoy isn't the only Sweden-based jazz artist who has provided both a Swedish-themed album and a Russian-themed album. In the 1960s, acoustic pianist Jan Johansson was inspired by Sweden's musical contributions on *Jazz På Svenska* ("Jazz for Sweden") and by Russia's musical contributions on *Jazz På Ryska* ("Jazz for Russia"). Tolstoy, similarly, has used jazz to acknowledge Sweden on *My Swedish Heart* and Russia on *My Russian Soul*. But while the late Johansson was an instrumentalist, Tolstoy is very much a singer -- and on *My Swedish Heart*, she uses both lyrics and melodies to pay tribute to Swedish jazz artists. Many talented jazz improvisers have come from Sweden over the years; thus, no one can realistically expect a 46-minute CD like *My Swedish Heart* to salute every important Swedish jazz musician who ever lived. This is a CD, not an encyclopedia. But Tolstoy shows good taste, putting her spin on pieces by baritone saxophonist Lars Gullin ("I Hope It's Spring for You," "Danny's Dreaming"), bassist Anders Jormin ("Mayday"), pianist Esbjörn Svensson ("The Morning of You," "Dialogue"), and others. The fact that this 2005 release celebrates the Swedish jazz scene doesn't mean that Tolstoy pretends to be a jazz purist. Although acoustic-oriented post-bop is the album's primary ingredient, Tolstoy sometimes detours into folk, Euro-classical, and cabaret territory. But she does so tastefully, and achieves a healthy amount of diversity without forgetting that Swedish jazz is the theme of this outing -- which is fairly unpredictable, but is also focused and coherent. *My Swedish Heart* is among the strongest albums in Tolstoy's catalog. --- Alex Henderson, Rovi

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