

Eric Clapton – Pilgrim (1998)

Written by bluesever

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1. "My Father's Eyes" (Eric Clapton) – 5:24 2. "River of Tears" (Clapton, Simon Climie) – 7:22 3. "Pilgrim" (Clapton, Simon Climie) – 5:50 4. "Broken Hearted" (Clapton, Greg Phillinganes) – 7:52 5. "One Chance" (Clapton, Simon Climie) – 5:55 6. "Circus" (Clapton) – 4:11 7. "Going Down Slow" (St. Louis Jimmy) – 5:19 8. "Fall Like Rain" (Clapton) – 3:50 9. "Born in Time" (Bob Dylan) – 4:41 10. "Sick & Tired" (Clapton, Simon Climie) – 5:43 11. "Needs His Woman" (Clapton) – 3:45 12. "She's Gone" (Clapton, Simon Climie) – 4:45 13. "You Were There" (Clapton) – 5:31 14. "Inside of Me" (Clapton, Simon Climie) – 5:25 15. "Theme From A Movie That Never Happened" - 3:31 Paul Brady Tin Whistle, Vocals (Background) Dave Bronze Bass, Guitar (Bass) Paul Carrack Guest Artist, Organ (Hammond) Chyna Vocals (Background) Eric Clapton Guitar, Vocals Simon Climie Drum Programming, Keyboard Programming, Keyboards, Vocals (Background) Nathan East Bass, Guitar (Bass) Kenneth Edmonds Vocals (Background) Steve Gadd Drums Nick Ingman String Arrangements Louis Jardim Bass, Percussion Luis Jardim Percussion Ruth Kelly-Clapton Speech/Speaker/Speaking Part, Talking The London Session Orchestra Strings Andy Fairweather Low Guitar Pino Palladino Bass, Guitar (Bass) Greg Phillinganes Composer, Keyboards Tony Rich Vocals (Background) Joe Sample Piano Chris Stainton Organ (Hammond) Paul Waller Drum Programming, Programming

One strange thing about Eric Clapton's '90s success is that it relied almost entirely on covers and new versions of classic hits; he released no albums of new material between 1989's *Journeyman* and 1998's *Pilgrim*. In the decade between the two albums, he had two new hits -- his moving elegy to his deceased son, "Tears in Heaven," and the slick contemporary soul of the Babyface-written "Change the World" -- and *Pilgrim* tries to reach a middle ground between these two extremes, balancing tortured lyrics with smooth sonic surfaces. Working with producer Simon Climie, his collaborator on the TDF side project, Clapton has created a numbingly calm record that, for all of its lyrical torment, displays no emotion whatsoever. Much of the problem lies in the production, which relies entirely on stiff mechanical drumbeats, gauzy synthesizers, and meandering instrumental interludes. These ingredients could result in a good record, as "Change the World" demonstrated, but not here, due to *Pilgrim*'s monotonous production. Unfortunately, Clapton doesn't want to shake things up -- his singing is startlingly

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mannered, even on emotionally turbulent numbers like "My Father's Eyes" or "Circus." Even worse, he's content to take a back seat instrumentally, playing slight solos and fills as colorless as the electronic backdrops. The deadened sonics would make Pilgrim a chore even if there were strong songs on the record, but only a handful of tunes break through the murk. Considering that Journeyman, his last album of original material, was a fine workmanlike effort and that From the Cradle and Unplugged crackled with vitality, the blandness of Pilgrim is all the more disappointing. ---Stephen Thomas Erlewine, AllMusic Review

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