

Terry Evans – Mississippi Magic (2001)

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Poniedziałek, 08 Luty 2010 12:28 - Zmieniony Czwartek, 11 Lipiec 2013 14:48

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01. *Big Bad Daddy Good* (4:46)
02. *Where The Southern Crosses The Dog* (4:25)
03. *I'd Rather Trick My Own Self* (5:16)
04. *Don't Let The Green Grass Fool You* (3:49)
05. *Blues and Wine* (4:44)
06. *I Want To Love You* (5:32)
07. *Mellow Down Easy* (3:22)
08. *Let Love Begin* (4:43)
09. *You Better Get Your Shit Together* (5:24)
10. *Where We Gonna Go* (3:44)

Musicians: Terry Evans (vocals, acoustic guitar); Willie Green Jr., Ray Williams (vocals); Jorge Calderon (acoustic guitar); Jesse Samsel (guitar); John "Juke" Logan (harmonica); David Woodford (tenor & baritone saxophone); Jeff Alviani (piano, Wurlitzer electric piano, Hammond B3 organ); Kenny Drew (bass); Phil Bloch (drums); Brian Zsupnik (percussion).

Terry Evans' fifth solo effort -- not including two with fellow vocalist Bobby King -- is his first not featuring guitar master and ex-employer Ry Cooder. While that may disappoint Cooder fans, especially since his work on previous Evans discs was some of the guitarist's best and most incisive non-soundtrack R&B/rock/blues playing of the '90s, it allows this album more room for the singer and his rugged touring group to strut their stuff. Recorded primarily live in the studio in only four days with his longtime backing musicians, *Mississippi Magic* is a rollicking example of Evans' uncut, non-commercialized, gritty gospel and swamp vocals. He reprises and rearranges the earlier tracks "Let Love Begin" and "Where We Gonna Go," which were originally recorded on albums with King. He also taps Jorge Calderon (who goes under the alias of J.C. Parsons for two more, and turns in stunning versions of "Don't Let the Green Grass Fool You" and especially Willie Dixon's "Mellow Down Easy." The latter finds his band locking together on a joyous, upbeat groove where Evans is positively jubilant and proves how tight and capable this group is. Elsewhere, guitarist Jesse Samsel turns in solos that are so similar to Cooder's -- especially when he lets his slide loose on "Let Love Begin" -- you'll be checking the

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liner notes to be sure who's playing. Evans digs into this material with the gruff but affable approach that added such down-home Southern soul to Cooder's and Hans Theessink's work. His version of Theessink's "Where the Southern Crosses the Dog" is one of this disc's highlights, but there is truly not a weak track here. Whether he's singing straight blues or testifying with religion-soaked R&B, Evans brings ferocious, rousing soul power to Mississippi Magic. ---Hal Horowitz, Rovi

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