

MICHAEL DOHERTY'S MUSIC LOG

SHARING MY LOVE OF MUSIC.

SATURDAY, APRIL 28, 2018

Emily Johnson: "Open Your Heart" (2018) CD Review



Emily Johnson is a singer and songwriter with a strong voice full of passion. On her debut EP, *Open Your Heart*, she delivers songs that feel like they're

about the healing and rejuvenating power of music and love, and these songs – particularly the first two tracks – are especially effective in these days of division and strife and troubles. On this EP she gives us positive, uplifting, empowering, and encouraging music, all tracks written by Emily Johnson and Narada Michael Walden. Narada Michael Walden, who has produced music for Aretha Franklin, Ray Charles, George Michael and Stevie Wonder (among others), produced and arranged these tracks, and played most of the instruments.

The EP opens with "The Light," a pop love song with some gorgeous gospel sounds, especially in the backing vocals. They have that kind of passion, you know? Cornell "CC" Carter and DeeDee Simon provide the backing vocals on this track. There is joy and love in Emily Johnson's delivery. *"The light shines above me when I'm with you/The light in you gives me everything I need/When you hold me close and tell me that you love me/The light in you gives me everything I need."* I hope everyone can experience that kind of feeling, because it's the very thing that keeps me going in these dark days of the Trump regime.

That's followed by the EP's title track, "Open Your Heart," which has a steady beat, marching us toward a positive future. At least, that's how it feels, and we all need this now. *"Please stop denying yourself/Please stop blaming everybody else/You know we can make it better/We all can get it together."* The song acknowledges that hatred abounds these days, but offers hope and a reminder that there is a way out, a way above, that it's all about heart. *"Open your heart/Let it go, let it go/Open your mind/And change the world, change the world/Start to believe and you will see/As long as you love, you will be free."* Her delivery is heartfelt, and so her words carry weight, and we believe her. There is an optimism here that I want to latch onto. Chris Heist Walden is a key on this track, and Jim Reitzel is on guitar. The backing vocals are again done by Cornell "CC" Carter and DeeDee Simon.

"I'm Blessed" is more of a dance song, with an electronic beat. I'm not as into it as I am the first two tracks, but it still has a positive vibe. This one was written by Narada Michael Walden, Gary Williams and Emily Johnson. G Dub provides some vocals. The EP then concludes with "Baby Forever" an innocent pop love song, with a happy sound. *"Be my baby/Come on, hold me tight/Be my baby/Love me tonight, love me tonight."*

CD Track List

1. The Light
2. Open Your Heart
3. I'm Blessed
4. Baby Forever

Open Your Heart is scheduled to be released on May 11, 2018 on Tarpan Records.

POSTED BY MICHAEL DOHERTY AT 11:50 P.M.

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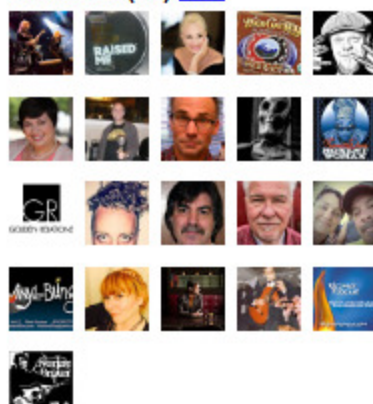
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MICHAEL DOHERTY

I started the music blog to let people know about all the good music that is out there. I only review CDs that I like. (This is partly selfish, as I don't want to listen to music I dislike.) Good Things About Bad Movies is about finding something good even in the worst films. I created an index, with a list of all of my blog entries, including Shakespeare entries and music reviews, arranged alphabetically by subject. Here is the link: <http://michaeldohertyindex.blogspot.com/> My friend Jason and I have a web series, "Grandmother Winsome's Variety Minute," and several episodes are up on You Tube, and also on the Grandmother's Fanny Game blog. What else? I am fascinated by the Marquis De Sade and Elizabeth Bathory. I often make decisions based on the humor factor.

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