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JSS Beautiful Mess Frontiers (2009)

JSS is of course the very talented vocalist Jeff Scott Soto (Journey/Talisman/Takara/Malmsteen et al) who has produced an album that will delight most of his fans - this is not one of JSS melodic rock albums - as it covers funk, rock, pop and soul in equal measure. No real band as such on this album as Paulo Mendonça is Jeff's co-writer and plays many of the instruments on this album. Frontiers gets to release this album in a physical format after the album has been available via download since last autumn. This release adds two bonus songs 'Heart Starts Healing' and 'Take U Over With Me' both of which more than stand up to the other fine songs on the album.



Now for me this album contains one of his best ballads to date, namely 'Gin & Tonic Sky' which just shows what an amazing voice he possesses. It really is a song to play in the summer evenings. From the rock end of the scale '21st Century' gets the old feet tapping and is the only straight ahead rocker on the album.

'Mountain' is a 70's funk rock monster! This is one song I bet Glenn Hughes wished he'd written and recorded. 'Cry Me A River' and 'Hey' see the pop/soul side of Jeff's voice shine through and both of these you could see being big hits with fans of Lenny Kravitz or Craig David if they get the chance to hear them. 'Kick It' has a lovely melody and Beatles like vocal arrangements.

This is an album you can tell taps into Jeff Scott Soto's own musical influences and loves with some of his best vocal work to date, especially on 'Gin & Tonic Sky' and 'Cry Me A River'. Being a long standing fan this is an album I have been waiting to hear for sometime. His other solo albums and the Talisman albums are great but with any of my favourite vocalists I want to hear them do at least one album in their career which is solely based on what they want to write and sing. With the right exposure outside of his normal rock fan base this album could really pick up a whole new set of fans.

Review by Jason Ritchie



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***** Out of this world | **** Pretty damn fine |

*** OK, approach with caution unless you are a fan |

** Instant bargain bin fodder | * Ugly. Just ugly