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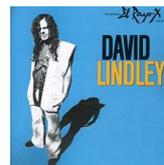

## David Lindley - El Rayo-X - Speakers Corner

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by Audiophile Audition | Apr 11, 2019 | Jazz CD Reviews, SACD & Other Hi-Res Reviews | 0 comments

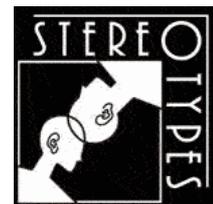
### David Lindley - El Rayo-X - Asylum Records SE-524 (1981)/Speakers Corner (2019) 180-gram stereo vinyl, 39:31 \*\*\*\*\*:

David Lindley is a legendary session musician and band leader. A distinguished multi-instrumentalist, he is widely known for his electric guitar, slide, fiddle, banjo, bass and mandolin work throughout his illustrious career. Lindley has done sessions for a wide array of performers, including Jackson Browne, Linda Ronstadt, James Taylor, Crosby & Nash, Dolly Parton, Bruce Springsteen, Warren Zevon, Bob Dylan, Toto, Rod Stewart, Curtis Mayfield and Joe Walsh. He has toured with many prominent rock artists and his unforgettable falsetto on "Stay" (from the Jackson Browne *Running On Empty* live album) is part of rock history. But Lindley began his career as a bandleader, fronting Kaleidoscope for five years in the 60's. In 1981, he hit a creative peak when he formed the musically eclectic band, El Rayo X. For most of the decade, he performed and recorded with this band as lead singer and main instrumentalist. He embraced a world sound that incorporated reggae, blues, rock, soul, cajun, Middle Eastern, traditional folk and various other influences. His unrelenting search for musical inspiration and different instruments has sustained his career and legacy.

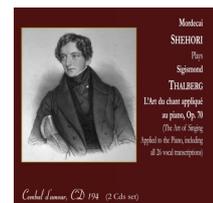


Speakers Corner has released a 180-gram of Lindley's Asylum debut, *El Rayo X*. Nearly four decades later, the creative musical vision of this unique musician is visceral. With a *who's who* of veteran musicians backing him, Lindley brings his humor-laced template to life. Side A opens with the slightly off-kilter reggae/ska number "She Took Off My Romeos". Written by Bob "Frizz" Fuller, the eccentric humor ("...I put on my smoking jacket, she took off my Romeos...") reflects the essential combination of musicianship and goofiness that is David Lindley. His warbling tenor fits perfectly. Dipping into classic rock and roll, his version of The Everly Brothers' "Bye Bye Love" is a slowed-down funky Jamaican/Zydeco groove. The relaxed pulse, articulate guitar and vocals are impeccable. "Mercury Blues" is a blues standard by K.C. Douglas that has been covered by other rock artists (most notably Steve Miller). Lindley brings high energy vocals and big-time electric slide guitar riffs to sell this one. A second Fuller gem, "Quarter Of A Man" exudes phenomenal laid-back reggae hooks with tight percussion, bass line and a slight tempo uptick. It is infectious, with its deliberate cadence, and the absurd social commentary (within the context of being "only a quarter of a man") is hilarious. Keeping the "Frizz" vibe going, "Ain't No Way" is typically unconventional with high-register vocals

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(including a terrific falsetto) and crisp guitar runs to surround the low-key tempo. There have been numerous versions of "Twist And Shout", the perennial rock party song. Lindley does not disappoint as the accelerated 'Island' arrangement features William D. "Smitty" Smith's old-school pop organ runs and catchy backup vocals by Jackson Browne and Jorge Calderon.

Side B opens with the no-holds-barred Tex-Mex (or rather Tex-Ray X) title cut. With a crashing downbeat, Garth Hudson's horns and keyboards add significant texture and loopy style. Lindley handles the Spanish lyrics formidably in a tantalizingly concise 2:56. Laying down serious r & b, The Isley Brothers 1961 "Your Old Lady" is nasty. Lindley's slide work is timeless and the sly lyrics ("...your old lady is my old lady, too...") resonates in Rayo X grooves. If you're going to cover a well-known Temptations song like "Don't Look Back", why not do it in full reggae mode? The exuberant instrumentation (with a cool bridge, percussion and rhythmic guitar) is engaging. Lindley never fails to surprise the listener. "Petit Fleur", sung entirely in French is a delicate, traditional early 20th century cajun waltz. Lindley's exquisite vocals and nimble fiddle carry the day. Staying in Louisiana, the "re-tooling" of Huey "Piano" Smith's r & b classic (retitled Tu-Ber Cu-Lucas And The Sinus Blues") is nothing short of a New Orleans house party. Punctuated rhythm breaks are merely another facet to the broad mosaic of this album. In a collection of terrific covers, a Lindley original, "Pay The Man" steals the show. With a deft touch, the reggae-inspired walking beat is complemented by peculiar fatalism ("...everybody got to pay the man...") and dark humor ("...Sally had a baby, it almost drove her crazy. She dropped it in the river, now Sally is a happy girl..."). A whistle or recorder injects the right amount of jauntiness to balance this weird exploration.

Speakers Corner's 180-gram vinyl re-mastering is excellent. The assortment of exotic stringed instruments are mixed with vibrant tonality. The electric slide has limited jaggedness and blends with the other instruments. Lindley's reedy tenor is front and center in the mix, and sounds quirky with unexpected strength.

*David Lindley - El Rayo X* is one of the greatest albums to emerge from the 80's!

#### Musicians:

David Lindley - guitar, bass, violin, lute, vocals; Jackson Browne - vocals; Jorge Calderon - vocals; Garth Hudson - horns, keyboards; Curt Bouterse - dulcimer; Bob Glaub - bass; Reggie McBride - bass; William "Smitty" Smith - organ, keyboards; Billy Payne - organ, keyboards; Ian Wallace - drums; Ras Baboo - accordion, timbales, percussion, vocals

#### TrackList:

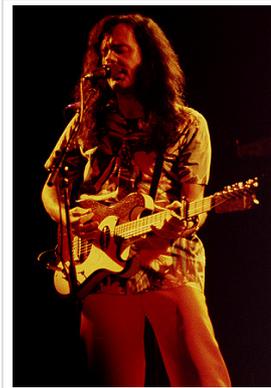
##### Side 1:

She Took Off My Romeos  
Bye Bye Love  
Mercury Blues  
Quarter Of A Man  
Ain't No Way  
Twist And Shout

##### Side 2:

El Rayo-X  
Your Old Lady  
Don't Look Back  
Petit Fleur  
Tu-Ber Cu-Lucas And The Sinus Blues  
Pay The Man

-Robbie Gerson



David Lindley,  
by Helge Øverås

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