

Flav Martin & Jerry Marotta ***Soul Redemption 2018***

Album Review by Malcolm Moore
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“To be fully alive, fully human, and completely awake is to be continually thrown out of the nest. To live fully is to be always in no-man's-land, to experience each moment as completely new and fresh. To live is to be willing to die over and over again.” – Pema Chödrön

Soul Redemption by Flav Martin & Jerry Marotta is a beautiful collection of songs that take the listener on a secret journey of the soul. Martin composed most of these songs in a friendly and personal way (English AND Spanish!) that makes it seem like he's talking directly to you. In addition to that, the album features his gorgeous guitar work that ranges all over the spectrum; everything from pop rock to flamenco! The sonic architect on this glorious effort is none other than famous drummer icon, Jerry Marotta (Peter Gabriel, Paul McCartney, Sarah McLachlan). Marotta's production values are impeccable, as usual, and the team of A-list players he selected are spectacular. The band includes Tony Levin (King Crimson, Paul Simon, John Lennon) on bass, Peter Primamore (film/TV composer) on piano, and Mark Schulman (Chris Botti, Suzanne Vega) on guitar. The album was recorded at the illustrious Dreamland Recording Studios in West Hurley, New York.

Tracks:

1. Soul Redemption-

Radiant opening song that features a trio of diverse and textural guitars, including; Flav Martin, Mark Schulman, and Thor Jensen (SWB). Lyrically inviting and mysterious, this song welcomes the listener by floating in the door like a feather.

2. Please-

This song blends so smoothly, greatly due to Marotta's magnificent Taos Drumming and wash of epic cymbal soundscapes. Martin, Levin, and Schulman flow together like a cool river as the vocals wash over the listener like a waterfall.

3. Drinking You-

Such an inviting song, immediately captured by the angelic harmonica, played by Gary Schreiner (Elton John, Carly Simon, Dave Chapelle). Peter Primamore's piano glistens like water droplets on the window. Martin delivers hilarious liquid wordplay such as; “...until I pass in the espresso lane.”

4. I Knew It Was You-

Thor Jensen reappears on guitar to compliment Martin's bursts of elegance. Jerry's lilting percussion, including a sparkling glockenspiel, highlights Primamore's bountiful and buoyant piano parts. This song serves as a musical hovercraft; it floats and glides effortlessly. The words and vocals are hopeful and intriguing.

5. *Tell Me To My Face-*

Gary Schreiner reappears on accordion(!) for this flamenco masterpiece. Martin switches between English and Spanish seamlessly like sidewinder, bewitching the listener with simultaneous romance and confrontation. Meticulous brushwork by Marotta contrasts the interplay between guitar and accordion while Levin slithers like a bass treble tremor.

6. *Rio De Janiero-*

The guitar trio (Martin, Schulman, Jensen) resurfaces with a different and sparse delicacy which supports the hash escapism of the lyrics. Into the wide arms of wanderlust, this tune descends into the sunset reflected by the oceanic expanse. Marotta's drum groove gallantly skims the surface. Whether you are of the cigarette lighter or cell phone generation, it's time to wave your hands in the air and sing along whilst raising your margarita.

7. *Wild Moon-*

This is definitely my favorite track by far. I must have played it 20 times in a row. Driving through Laurel Canyon in California late at night, the emotions were overwhelming. Such a luxurious melody that wraps its arms around and won't let you go. This pulchritudinous python was haunting me for days. Also...who else, but Jerry Marotta can make a song glisten with a garden weasel???

8. *Coffee Song-*

Once again, Martin intoxicates the listener with a romantic Spanish song about...coffee! Who better than Tony Levin (espresso connoisseur) to lay down the sonic boom? Primamore tickles the ivory with a wink in his eye. Marotta brings the percussive milk, cream, and espresso beans into a small saucepan, bringing it to a boil over medium-high heat. Pour and serve!

9. *How Could You Leave Me Now-*

I've always admired albums that end with a question or an unresolved chord. It lets the listener answer the question, and also, stay hungry for...more music!

Flav Martin's lyrics are insightful and revealing. Somehow, he's sharing his life experiences, but just enough that it's not too specific, and anyone can relate, injecting their own trials, tribulations, hopes, and fears. It's like having a close friend open up their heart and whisper in your ear. Martin genuinely has a gift for storytelling. Even when he expresses despair, he throws in a little joke to lighten the burden. He realizes that a true survivor needs to be able to laugh at

himself. Whether you are just starting a relationship, right in the middle of one, and just experienced a break-up, there's something for everyone here. Just like the beloved Buddhist teacher Pema Chödrön, Flav Martin understands that Soul Redemption is all about...the journey.

Jerry Marotta's lush production is not only due to his own brilliant instincts. He also surrounds himself with a top-notch team. *Soul Redemption* was engineered by Bella Blasko, Matthew Cullen, Connor Milton, Pete Caigan, Adam Armstrong, and Joe Quigley. Mixing was done by Michael Cozzi (The Security Project) and mastering by world renown knob guru Chris Athens (Rick Ross, Coldplay, Erykah Badu).

All the songs get stuck in your head, have catchy riffs, are meticulously crafted, and are intricately complex, yet somehow, come across as so simple that one cannot help but sing along. Perfect music if you are going on a road trip. Martin's natural charm is magnified by Marotta's lush production.

***Look for Martin Marotta on tour soon in the USA and Europe!**

Links:

Flav Martin-
<http://flavmartin.com>

Jerry Marotta-
www.jerrymarotta.com

Dreamland Recording Studios-
www.dreamlandrecording.com

Purchase-
www.jerrymarotta.com/music/flav-martin-jerry-marotta-soul-redemption