

MaryLouiseBuirgyPamelaRobinson2009ACallToPrayerTextTVS

Buirgy-Robinson Review

A Call to Prayer

Mary Louise Buirgy and Pamela Robinson

2009 KIVA Records

Review by Tim Van Schmidt

Prayer is calling- in so many different voices and languages, including music. The 15 track CD release by Mary Buirgy and Pamela Robinson, "A Call to Prayer," shows that not just one kind of music can answer back. Here acoustic, blues and New Age flavors make use of piano, guitar, sax and strings to create a musical space where there is room for both deep introspection and outspoken joy.

It all starts off in a good place with Robinson's "Let Go Let God," an easy tempo piece that disarms the listener, relieves stress and welcomes the sincere and purposeful music that is to follow. Then the album gets serious.

The second track, "Truth in a Whisper" by Linda Baum, is a beautifully layered production, featuring Buirgy's rich, deep vocals supported by guitar, piano and cello, emotionally strong and full. The musical power of "Truth in a Whisper" is later mirrored by the equally strong track number five, "Medicine Wheel" by Kate Wolf. Again Buirgy's full-bodied vocal work treats well-crafted words with loving respect.

But that's just one kind of "call to prayer" reflected by these recordings. The two originals by Buirgy, "As You Believe" and "Don't Wait," are both gospel and blues-flavored, fairly upbeat and include some good-natured sax-piano play.

On the other end of the spectrum is the beautifully spacious "How Can I Keep from Singing" by Rev. Robert Lowry- a recording that once again creates a special environment for Buirgy's voice- and the echo of a penny whistle.

The rest of the material on the album was written by Robinson, who shares the vocal duties on most songs with Buirgy. Robinson's best swings from a kind of country-ish acoustic tune, "Ripples," to a truly personally revealing recording, "This is Who I've Come to Be," a meditative track that puts everything else on pause- I guess, like a good prayer should.

But that's not the end of it. The final track of "A Call to Prayer," Robinson's "Every Time," revs things way back up in a revival tune that is, well, fun. So, by the end of "A Call to Prayer," Buirgy and Robinson have explored more than just a few of the musical languages that can bring us closer to prayer, delivering deep, personal emotion as well as toe-tapping energy along the way.

The album was produced by Robinson, Buirgy and Russ Hopkins, of KIVA Records. Musicians include Dave Zekman, Liz Barnez, Jerry Palmer, David Jacoby and more. The cover painting, "World Religions," is by S. Rebecca Shinas. The song lyrics are available at www.MaryBuirgy.com. For more information, go to www.kivarecords.com.