



decembergirl
Marina Belica

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Singer/Composer Marina Belica Releases Instrumental Album, "one sky"
(Decembergirl Records, DEC022)

Singer/composer Marina Belica, known for her vocal and keyboard work with October Project, has released "one sky," an instrumental album featuring ten of her own compositions.

Described by Marina as "modern, intimate chamber music," each track is arranged for acoustic ensembles that feature a unique palette of string, wind and percussion instruments. The music is rooted in romanticism, with an emphasis on emotional and lyrical melodies and occasional hints of ethnic and folk music traditions.

"one sky" is produced and arranged by Marina in collaboration with producer/performer/composers Randy Crafton (an acclaimed world music percussionist with over two dozen CDs to his credit as a producer/engineer, including the most recent Richie Havens release) and Christopher Cunningham (a producer, guitarist and film composer who produced Marina's first solo CD, "decembergirl," and has toured and recorded with a variety of well-known artists including Marianne Faithfull and Marshall Crenshaw). String quartet arrangements are provided by Ralph Farris, a Grammy nominee for his work on Five for Fighting's "Superman."

Says Belica, "Our approach to arranging was a lot like a game of musical chairs." World music multi-instrumentalist Jorge Alfano appears on fretless bass, indigenous wind instruments and sitar (to name only a *few*), while noted Irish musician Ivan Goff adds penny whistle to the trio recording "First Star." Seth Farber appears on accordion in "Simple Things," and clarinetist/saxophonist Amy Platt carries the melody on four tracks (see especially track four, "Bedouin"). Marina plays keyboards and adds vocal textures throughout, including solo piano on the closing track, "A Way Home."

The many different colors of the music are reflected in the cover art, a panoramic photograph of a sunset over the Pacific that inspired the album title. It was shot by artist/photographer Steven Lowy (who also did photography for "decembergirl").

The melody on the opening and title tracks, "I Was There" and "One Sky," performed by alto flute (track 1), oboe and clarinet (track 8), belies the folk song tradition of Marina's Slovak heritage, with its strong sense of melancholy and yearning.

Track two, "Simple Things," was co-written by Emil Adler of October Project and features the unusual combination of accordion, guitar and marimba.

The third composition, "Waterwheel," is the first of three tracks on which string quartet appears. Kelly Peral plays the melody on oboe and Randy transforms a bucket filled with water into a percussion instrument.

"Bedouin," explains Belica, "came into my head and through my hands one day completely intact, along with an image of Bedouins on horseback racing through the desert at night." Amy Platt opens and closes the piece with a dreamy and seductive improvisation on clarinet, accompanied by Jorge Alfano on sitar, Randy on percussion and Dave Phillips on upright bass.

The fifth track, "Scene From Afar," features piano and string quartet, with the melody line performed by Christopher Cunningham on 12-string guitar. Randy lays down the foundation with djembuka, a West African percussion instrument related to the djembe.

The simple, plaintive nature of the next track, "First Star," inspired the choice of pennywhistle on melody. Ivan Goff, an Irishman in New York, adds a genuinely Celtic feel.

"Early Morning," track seven, was the first track recorded for the CD. Amy Platt's lead line on clarinet is offset by a repeated motif featuring cello and voice. Jorge performs on the bansuri, an Indian bamboo flute, and joins up with Christopher on guitar at the end for an improvised duet.

"Western Light," the last ensemble track, "helped renew my appreciation of how beautiful the soprano saxophone can sound," offers Belica. Piano and string quartet accompany.

The recording ends with a piano solo from Marina on "A Way Home."

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