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Mimi Novic & Edmond Fokker – Seven Prayers Of Love

MUSIC REVIEW | Jer@SBS | March 9, 2021 | 0

Mimi Novic & Edmond Fokker – Seven Prayers Of Love – Album Review

What an absolutely fantastic & fascinating combination of talents in this collaborative effort.

Every so often, I recall a conversation I had with my influential Uncle Gary back from the days of my youth, when I was staying at his place with my Aunt down in San Diego – a trip from Canada. It was his sad fairly late at night, I might have even been dozing off, actually, when the door to the spare room I was staying in cracked ajar and his mustached face slid through to look at me, quizically. "What are you listening to?" he asked. I told him it was the same thing I listened to every night pretty much – Nirvana – I mean hey, it was the mid-90s…chances are if you were a teenager like I was, you would have been too. "That's poison for your mind," he said. "*Isn't not putting anything positive in there for you to use. The last thing you should be doing is letting that spin overnight & have that soak into your brainwaves*."

All genius of Kurt Cobain's songwriting aside…he probably wasn't wrong. Understand, good of Uncle Gary ran a health-club of his own, believed in the power of positively 24/7 (which included his sleeping), and was in general, one of the nicest guy-thinkers somewhat ahead of their time. He would fall asleep with inspirational speeches on self-motivational, soothing music…stuff he fully believed he would absorb through osmosis and become a better person the following day, just by taking it all on while he slept at night. And who would I be to say he was wrong? He was never wrong more than 100% positive at all times…and if listening to records exactly like the one here by Mimi Novic & Edmond Fokker was a part of that recipe, I mean, had I known and as a boy what I know now as an adult, I probably would have been more apt to take his advice at the time. Listening to music like this is an experience that enriches your soul in countless ways – I love what this duo has done here, and I'm sure, Gary would have too…R.I.P!

The balance of strengths shared between them and the cohesion of this record *Seven Prayers Of Love* almost makes it futile to break it down track-by-track as I tend to normally do in writing reviews. I can cite a minutiae moment here & there that I might slightly enjoy a bit more than the rest by a hair – but really, when it comes right down to it, you either find you can fully get into Classical-based music like this with its infusion of spoken-word, or it's just not your jam, so too is the risk, in any specific style of music, that's the nature of the game. The point I'm making is that if you're expecting to find something to sing along with, I'm sorry, this isn't the record for you at the time…but that should never be the full measure of the value of music in our lives, not its only purpose – it's records just like this one that open doors for listeners in multiple ways, and generates interest in how complementary different it all really is.

I appreciate what I'm hearing on *Seven Prayers Of Love* in countless ways. Mimi Novic is amazingly inspirational in her words – and what an incredible voice she has! For real y'all…this is about as well-assembled, produced and performed as I've ever found a spoken-word based record to be…between her ever-insightful details and the powerfully gripping emotion on display so expertly played by Edmond Fokker on the violin…no lie folks, I sat and listened to this album for what felt like days on end, just frozen here in time, taking in every word like I was encompassed in a deeply soothing meditative trance. Essentially, you'd have to assume that this would be the exact goal & direct intentions of both Mimi and Edmond and the reasons why they've made this album to begin with – and I can confirm, mission 100% accomplished. While the music certainly changes from track to track like any album would, the consistency of the material keeps you entirely captivated. Yes there are seven separate tracks listed on *Seven Prayers Of Love*, but it genuinely plays like one authentic experience to behold from start to finish. Left uninterrupted, you'll find you have no problem whatsoever letting this album guide you into your own thoughts as you consider Mimi's words & let the magic of Edmond's music fully enchant your mind.

As one of the world's leading inspirational authors & motivational speakers, there's no question that Mimi Novic knows the path to connect her words to those out their listening. Track after track throughout this record, I continually marvelled at just how impeccable & precise she would be – both through her immaculate performances, and simply what she was communicating as we sat. You'll hear the extraordinary technique of Fokker and the bold emotion he plays with instantly as the first track "Dance Of Life with Vocalise" begins – and soon enough, nearly two-minutes into the music, Mimi is revealed and the spoken-word journey this album will take you on truly begins. The whispered hush of her words is practically an adventure in ASMR awesomeness of its own, but combined with the exceptional texture and tone from Edmond's violin and the subtle piano melody in the background, "Dance of Life with Vocalise" instantly reveals just how magnificent this pairing of their talents will be throughout the entire distance of *Seven Prayers Of Love*. Novic is as poetic as she is insightful, Edmond is as endearing as he is entertaining – and together, they truly can't be beat when it comes to the combination of message & music as one. From well-crafted tales like this one, to the joy of an additional tracks to follow – the blueprint is right on display from the first moments forward, and it continually leads this duo to successful results that have us right on the edge of our seats listening along.

"Sweet Soul with Souvenir de Vienne" and its first minute of instrumental magic brought me right back to that moment I heard "When You Wish Upon A Star" so long ago, and how special that sound truly was. Mimi joins in and brings a lot of love on with her in this tale, beautifully crafting a storyline that shows us the depth of emotion she's dealt w/ at some hear, with that kind of spiritualism that provides further insight into how we can apply so much of what she's talking about in her stories, to our own daily lives. This is that osmosis effect good of Uncle Gary was talking about so long ago in action here – I've put *Seven Prayers Of Love* on several times since whenever I could carve out time this past week or so since I got this record, and every time I've had the opportunity to spin it, I've literally come out feeling BETTER every time! Refreshed, restored, reinvigorated…you simply cannot put a price tag on an experience like this. "Promise of Love with Largo" is another stellar example of the gravitational pull this record has through the way she performs, and another early highlight tale of love that is fully loaded with stunning details. You can see the imagery in your mind as you listen to her words, and the added emotion supplied so expertly by Edmond's steady hand on the violin surrounding her makes for highly memorable moments as you listen to them. Mimi relays this tale that's you feel feeling like you're right there underneath the stars along with them, dreaming out loud. In terms of conclusions, "Promise Of Love with Largo" has one of my absolute favorites on the record, embracing destiny towards the very end of this particular track and setting up the suspense right at the end before it's all over in the mood of the music. Very clever stuff all-around…absolutely brilliantly well-played, and exquisite details from Novic.

If I did have to choose a favorite…and keep in mind, someone would have to be forcing me to split serious hairs to do so…I'd probably be inclined to go with "Sorrow of Tears with Meditation" as my number one choice. It's a fantastic representation of all that this duo does so well from start to finish, but also a tale that's so well told it continually blew my mind. I'll put it to you this way dear readers, dear friends – I've been writing for so long I've seen my beard go from Technicolor to nearly all grey – and I couldn't hold a candle up to what Mimi Novic is capable of in her words. The way she's personified Love throughout this song and made it an authentic character that plays a such massive role – the starring role really – in the words & details of "Sorrow of Tears with Meditation," is beyond incredible and certainly beyond any description I could personally write to do its magnificence the justice it deserves. The best way I can think to put it, is that Mimi earns her credibility big-time through the words she's penned for this particular track…you'll hear descriptions of sadness & despair as intimately and at the very-beginning of "Sorrow of Tears with Meditation" that you'll feel the complete emptiness & devastation she's experienced as if it were your own. Through the warm glow of love's embrace, you travel into the dark though the heart of darkness in full detail before you get to the light of acceptance – all-in-all, it's awesome to hear the amount of contrast found in the adventure that lies in between. For a brief moment, you might even assume that Mimi is about to be swallowed whole by the swell of her emotions and the perilous despair of her thoughts as this track starts out, but by the end, your faith is completely restored by what she's discovered and the extraordinary beauty that comes along with it.

I could listen to Mimi read the phonebook…and if Edmond wanted to attempt to play it, I'd happily listen to that as well – they're that exceptional as individual artists, and purely phenomenal when combined. Mimi's credentials I've already told you a little bit about – but Edmond's self-proclaimed an equally impressive resume of his own, having performed in everything from ravaged active warzones, to the legendary Carnegie Hall…and from what I can gather in the information I've read, everywhere in between as well. No functioning ears out there would be able to mistake his impeccable technique and the passion in his instrumentation for anything else though…reading about his accomplishments is one thing, but to hear his skills in action is nothing short of breathtaking, each and every time. Like I was telling ya towards the beginning of this review, the balance of strengths between them is spellbinding – and personally, I love how Mimi's given a full share of the spotlight to Edmond's musicianship as the vast majority of these songs begin with extended instrumental sections between the violin and piano. While most spoken-word records have the light shining directly on the words with the music in much more of a secondary role, *Seven Prayers Of Love* truly felt like these two stars shared an equal footing in the grander way through. You can't help but feel the way that their combined talents lead to results that connect to our hearts & minds – listen to track six "Hidden Mysteries with Intermezzo" and see if you don't leave feeling more inspired to go out there & conquer the world in whatever way you can unlike ever before! As subtle, delicate, and charming as the music can be, there's no denying the massively uplifting surge of inspiration you'll find comes along with songs just like this one…you should feel like you could go out there and push a mountain from one continent to the next after "Hidden Mysteries with Intermezzo"! Or at-the-very-least, or better yet, take a cue from Mimi directly and be courageous enough to create change for the better of one & all. Fuel your soul with energy, and renew your soul with purpose by listening to this track, "Hidden Mysteries with Intermezzo" has such a fantastically beautiful perspective, and it's harrowing as well as a poignant reminder that we ALL should hear: "*The power to change the world begins, and ends, with us*." Novic ain't wrong. With great power comes great responsibility, as they say – make sure to use your time wisely, love one another at all times, & be the change you wanna see in this world, have faith that love will lead you to all the right places where you're meant to be in this life, and beyond.

"Yearning with Aria" offsets the opportunity for the music & message combination of this duo to make more of an impact on listeners with a bit more space to use, on what's only one of two tracks to cross the five-minute threshold in the lineup of *Seven Prayers Of Love*. Where it's more likely a possibility that I've missed a reference somewhere along the way – this song also has the most definitive reference to God that I seemed to find within this record…or perhaps at least, the most noticeable given where the reference is placed within the words of this "Yearning with Aria" at the very end. Personally, as a longtime dude outside of the faith-based world, I appreciate writing like this…it's very open, accepting, and even somewhat generalized to the point where, when Mimi does mention God, that could still be taken in a highly interpretive way – as in, whatever it is YOU may recognize as God or a connection to a plan that's designed much greater than our own individual lives. For me, after keeping religion at a very young age in favor of spirituality and its much broader definitions, my God has been music ever since – but you'll find that in listening to this song, the logic of the conclusions drawn would still be equally inclusive, expansive and valid as if I'd ardently pledged a form to God like most people do. I'm able to reconcile God with equating to whatever that might mean to you, or to the next person – and the last thing I'd ever be upset by is a variance in our definitions, there are tons of variations on what God means to be or who he or she might be, and I'm willing to accept them all if they make you happier to be here on this planet, with us, right here, right now. Regardless of my views however, I think a lot of people out there will appreciate that same very thing…how you can get a whole lot of spiritual goodness here in Novic's words no matter what or who you believe in, and understand the power of what she's saying is fully applicable to so many of us out there seeking out purpose & meaning. Quite likely, you'll find more often than not, the beliefs & values put forth will probably jive with your own – like for instance, I fully believe there's a much bigger 'plan' of sorts out there, or a grand design for life itself…I'll admit, it's never something I know how to put into words, but there are multiple points where what I believe and what religion or faith will present that intersect at many places. Destiny, coincidence, fate…these are terms get close to belief & faith without fully laying out who should be getting the credit for making it all happen behind the scenes…but call it what you like, the results would theoretically still be the same – a name isn't going to matter whatsoever if we're being guided along. I really like "Yearning with Aria" and everything it has so considering…though provoking for sure, and in many ways every bit as soothing as any other track on this record for the soul, somewhat depending on what you might believe – but at the core of this cut, are values I'm sure we can all relate to in our lives.

As always, the combination of piano and Edmond's violin is nothing short of purely beautiful, you would have heard that all the way through the distance of this record, and certainly in the finale of the last two tracks allowing for some of his own best to shine right through our speakers. "Unknown Path with Ave Maria" is gorgeous – I'm honestly not sure how' anyone else would have it – gorgeous would be the conclusion we'd all come to, right? Violin is such an amazingly expressive instrument…I mean, you really do need a master virtuoso like Edmond to help appreciate what's good from what's great – listening to this man play has been nothing but a pure joy to the ears and a remarkable pleasure to experience such skilled instrumentation. He's able to mix tension, drama, sincerity, and beauty…all through that exquisite tens of an instrument like the violin that can capture expression & emotion every bit as well as words ever could. Novic and Fokker make quite the complementary pair…there's simply no doubt about it after listening to the results of a record like this and how perfectly they've found a balance between the realms of Classical music and Spoken Word…this whole experience has had them unified as one the entire time, focused intently on bringing this vision of message & music together as flawlessly professionally, and naturally as humanly possible – and they should be mighty proud of what they've achieved here. They've kept me completely engaged and invested into every moment of both the music & words throughout the entire lineup of songs and delivered an experience that's 100% unique to itself – and I love that. The most you'll find me conceding here is that there's likely a time & a place that you'll find *Seven Prayers Of Love* fits into your day…maybe it is, or maybe it isn't the record you'll choose to go driving down the highway with in the bright summer sun…maybe it just depends on who you are, where you are in life, and what you need at that particular time…all that's a lot harder to say. What I can tell ya is listening to tracks like "Unknown Path with Ave Maria," or any of the soul-soothing songs from *Seven Prayers Of Love* for that matter, is that you're guaranteed to find a wealth of wisdom & insightful words, stunningly emotive music that will certainly move you, and a pair of extremely talented artists both using their skills in the most heartfelt & altruistic ways possible, for the greater good. An absolute pleasure to listen to all the way through – you'll feel genuine peace in listening to this album, and by the time "Unknown Path with Ave Maria" is over, you'll know exactly when to reach for this record whenever you might need it again in the future, or simply want to revisit the beauty of it all.

Find out more about Mimi Novic and her official pages below!

Homepage: https://miminovic.co.uk

Spotify: https://open.spotify.com/artist/7bgaeMCVfCeRHm6dZEfRgl

Apple Music: https://music.apple.com/ca/artist/mimi-novic/1129824099

Find out more about Edmond Fokker at his official pages below!

Homepage: https://edmondfokker.com

Spotify: https://open.spotify.com/artist/2CzXDFKCAeKTZaTA8DG

Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/edmondfokkerviolin

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