

Poetic Champions Compose

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Having just read several reviews of Poetic Champions Compose, Van Morrison's glorious 1987 recording, I felt the rare compulsion to share my own thoughts and feelings about the album. This happens to be for me a very special record. It was, in fact, the very first Van Morrison album I ever heard. This may not sound terribly significant, but given my current status as a hugely devoted fan, I assure you it is. It happened one day some eight years ago while perusing the cassette rack at my local public library (fittingly enough), when I came across the album at hand. I can't tell you what made me decide to check it out, as I'd never even heard of the man, but upon listening to it later that evening, I was very glad I did. In fact, it made such an intense and immediate impact on me that I would soon be going out to get one Van album after another, each time amazed to find yet another uniquely great collection of songs. Van Morrison, for those of you not familiar, is a vocalist, musician, and songwriter of truly rare talent and substance. He is unmatched in the pop music world with regard to his fluency in a wide range of musical genres, his prolific output of almost an album a year for more than thirty years, and the passion and sincerity which he exudes through every song he writes. And to think that before I stumbled onto Van that fateful day, I thought I knew all there was to know about good music. Hardly. Listening to Poetic Champions Compose, and later the two dozen or so other albums in his catalog, showed me just how good music can be (perhaps, especially when we turn off the radio). Music of this kind is so non-mainstream that it is almost like a secret, as Van himself is something of a secret. To discover music of this caliber, to understand and appreciate it, was to embark on a musical journey which I am still on to this day. Now, you may have noticed that I haven't gone into a track-by-track dissertation of the record in an attempt to illustrate each of its beautiful elements and nuances, and I don't intend to. You see, that is the part of music reviews that I've always been a bit leery of. It's my belief that those things can't be expressed with words with any real effectiveness. Well, at least not by me. Even if I could describe to you, say, the

graceful beauty of the piano in Celtic Excavation, the tender lyrics of Someone Like You, the inspiring religious overtones of The Mystery, I wouldn't bother. After all, can I really expect you to fall in love with this album just as I did, or to fall in love with it at all? I don't think I can. All I can tell you for certain is, I did.

When it comes to the music of Van Morrison and your a fan of his style, you almost can't go wrong. A lot of people just don't dig Van's music and it's a shame. I think people don't like it because they are musically limited and frankly Van's style is just too darn urbane for a lot of people. But enough of my preaching I don't agree with what a lot of critics said about this 1987 release. They said that compared to No Guru from the previous year that this was a lackluster effort. Not necessarily it just depends what style you like. This album has a smooth polished jazz and adult pop sound to it. Let us begin with Spanish Steps this saxophone instrumental is a quite dark and brooding opener for a Van album but it is relaxing like the other 2 instrumentals that follow. Next is The Mystery that has a nice string arrangement it gives the song Van's special Celtic touch. Following is Queen of the Slipstream, good song nice complex melody with nice harp and string arrangements. I forgot that Love Existed is a song that has a radio friendly sound to it the way the sax closes the song sounds cool I wish they would have played that part out longer. The only song I don't care for is Motherless Child it is just kind of brooding and too long. But Van really shows his talent on Celtic Excavation a great sax instrumental the ending is pretty moving you can even hear Van grunt at the end of it. I think Someone Like You is my favorite song on the album (very emotional song) guys if this song doesn't turn a woman on I am not sure what music will. Allan Watts Blues is pretty cool it sounds like it also could have snagged some radio play. Give Me My Rapture is a simple but very enjoyable Gospel number that shows another side of the album. Did Ye get Healed is really cool as well very enjoyable. The instrumental Allow Me closes the album and is very good. It either sounds like a slow dance song or a song you get drunk to like the Leaving Las Vegas soundtrack. It is so great I can like music even my parents enjoy and this album is an example of that. Definitely worth taking a second look at!

This CD has been in my sound system for ten years, on and off. It simply refuses to grow old. I get withdrawal symptoms when I haven't heard it for a length of time. Beautiful, haunting, romantic, melodic... I do not command the vocabulary to describe the power of this CD. I have nearly 900 CDs in my collection. This is in the

top three. This is a Desert Island Disc, for those of you who know what that is.

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Product Details Sales Rank: #48755 in Music Published on: 1998-07-14 Released on: 1998-07-14 Rating: NR (Not Rated) Number of discs: 1 Formats: Original recording reissued, Original recording remastered Number of items: 1 Dimensions: .45 h x 4.94 w x 5.50 l, .23 pounds

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