

Woodland Moons

By

Marcia Watson Bendo

Written by

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There are times when you think you have heard all that there is to hear and then an album of such clarity and beauty hits you straight in the face and demands to be listened to and adored on high, that statement rings true for this new offering by **Marcia Watson Bendo**, entitled **Woodland Moons**.

This music journey of splendour starts with the track **Fallen Leaves Moon**, the sullen and moody composition falls around us like a day in late October, the flute is perfection indeed, but the symphonic backdrop is simply sublime at setting this vast cinematic offering squarely on stage for us all to admire.

It is no wonder to me that fans of contemporary instrumental music are falling in love with this release, it has everything, and on this next piece called **Planting Moon** we hear even more, we hear the energy build, we feel a sense of excitement through the music, the combination of an uplifting flute, a wonderfully enchanting piano and a sumptuous array of fine orchestrations.

The moon is always a subject of mystery and imagination and throughout my life I have looked up and have been entranced by her beauty. On **Strawberry Moon** the inclusion of percussion can be found, this comes courtesy of the only other musician on the album in *Rafael Pereira*, mix this with some startlingly significant piano and the constant narration of the flute, and once more you have a total winner of a track.

It must be said I am struggling to believe that this is a debut album, something of such quality you may find in someone's collection at about the three album mark, but it's true, and if you keep an open ear to this next piece called **Midsummer Moon** you will see why. Midsummer nights are indeed magical

and the artist has created that energy right here in this piece that is so redolent of the subject matter, why I could even see Puck himself playing his pipes in the bow of a tree, while I gaze upwards at the midsummer moon and as I do, I repeat the words of Shakespeare *"My soul is in the sky."* Musically this even touches the hem of the classical genre and one of the finest performances off the entire album can be found right here!

We are approaching the mid-way marker on our musical voyage of great beauty and as we do so we arrive at a graphic opportunity superbly seized by the artist called **Forest Moon**. There is a lightness of spirit about this offering that is very appealing, it could easily follow our midsummer night in the woodlands of mystery and magic. Some delicate natural sounds give us the backdrop of a Forest in the light of a new day, and the style and essence almost manifest a first light moment of musical brilliance by the musician on the flute.

Yellow Leaves Moon is our arrival at the fulcrum of the release, once more Watson Bendo conjures up a magical energy, one that sparkles through and into her performance, but then this tranquil fluency drifts over us completely so that we may enjoy this breath taking reverie via the flute and the lush orchestrations completely.

Being one who has studied animal totems for many years, I adored this next piece called **Big Bear Moon**. Watson Bendo has it down to a tee here. The slow and almost bizarrely delicate energies of the Bear are captured here, in a delightfully fun performance; the chimes and orchestrations just add weight to an already clever arrangement.

One of the most charming offerings on this album comes at this juncture and called **Snow Moon**. The symbiotic connection between flute and piano are melded here with perfection, a little reflective energy and an imploring performance by the artist go to make this a stunningly pretty, but also remarkably pristine composition, and here one can truly enjoy the attention to detail and the essence of the subject matter with ease.

As we edge ever deeper into this dimension created by **Marcia Watson Bendo**, we come across a delicate arrangement called **Crane Moon**. The piano here manifests the open musical threshold for us to crossover and into, the master

narrator weaves tones from her flute in a wizardly fashion, one can see the Crane very carefully walk with such softness and exactness, it is exciting to listen to and be enthralled by this offering. A tip of the hat goes to *Rafael Pereira* for those timely crescendos.

Our journey has been long, and as we near a bend in the road we see the sign for the longest offering on the release, this one is called **Maple Sugar Moon**. There is a real rich tapestry of musical craft within this piece, one that almost glistens with expectation. The tempo is slow and full and one must say to this point that the piano here and added sounds, all go to manifesting a whole new layer of brilliance already created by the flute.

The penultimate piece off the release is fun and quite charming, **Little Bear Moon**, at just less than five minutes long it is the shortest track off the album, but that hardly matters as you will find another masterful performance and another one that has a really lively sense of fun within its light-hearted construction.

It is amazing to think that we are now about to open the last doorway to the album and it is a piece rather charmingly called **Berry Moon**. This is the perfect end of release piece as well, it has a slight elevation in tempo, it has a fluent and crisp melody, one that will raise the energy of the listener enabling them to leave the album fully refreshed, entertained and having enjoyed every second of what is a superb compilation of beautifully crafted arrangements.

Woodland Moons the debut album, yes I did just say that, has to one of the best released so far this year long. The production quality, the splendid orchestrations take us into an almost *David Arkenstone* styled realm, and through the tremendous performances from Watson Bendo, the listener will feel like they have journeyed far and wide to wonderful musical vistas, and would not hesitate to do so again. **Woodland Moons** is one of those albums you just cannot fault and as such I can see this going on to being a real listener favourite and a huge chart hit.