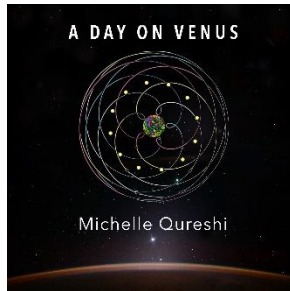


Michelle Qureshi

A Day on Venus

michellequreshi.com



Despite the planet in its name, one thing guitarist **Michelle Qureshi's** new album **A Day on Venus** is not, is space music. Oh there is a definite allusion to many things cosmic here, but they are more spiritual than astronomical. Michelle's album is eighteen tracks of the unique manifestations of the planet Venus. And yes, 18 songs. Her albums have always had a generous amount of songs on them. On this recording Michelle incorporates not only the acoustic guitar, but also other instruments such as synth, bass, and electric guitar.

Many cultures, present and past, revere Venus and impute the planet with healing energies and the Goddess with immortality, divinity, beauty, love, and changes in the path of women and men. So, we have the astrophysical, the divine feminine attributes, the celestial references, and probably some other obscure mentions that need exploring. Let's do just that.

The opening song, **Stars by the Pocketful**, an acoustic guitar sojourn, introduces us to the night sky as if it is our very first time. Dusk fades into darkness and stars take their places in our eyes and our imaginations. Soft strumming and mellow background flows into the night. It is time to ponder what dreams might come true.

Strongly focused solo guitar brings the tune **American Prelude** to life. Michelle puts a little riff in there, bum, bum, bum that kisses classical roots, but then her contemporary concepts take over in a flowing tune that is filled with positive, dreamy runs of what Americana music should sound like. Gotta be a nod to Ackerman in there somewhere.

My favorite on A Day on Venus is a song called **Luminous Fields**. Lush imagery combined with Native American Style Flute reminds us that Venus is also known as the Morning Star. Look to the east and find your way, for Venus is the first beckoning light. Beautiful flute rises up like a prayer to greet the day.

Soft and sweetly delivered, the song **Belonging Here** on acoustic guitar is a friendly ballad that, whether played on a back porch or in a bright living room, is comfortable and welcomed as an old friend. I like the instrumental for its familiar warmth and comforting phrasing. It's good to be here.

Michelle plugs into the amp for her tune **Rain in Heaven**. This is a bass-y romp filled with star spangled electronic elements and layers and quavers of rich sound mixed with an upbeat melody. If it is raining in heaven, there might be a little splashing going on mixed with some hail. This ebullient and fun song suggest ponchos are required.

Unexpected piano and low key synth conjoin on the tune **Warm Waters**. No one said this was a straight up guitar album. This is a slow, lazy tune that meanders like a hidden canyon stream. It appears as though it is just rolling along, but after a million years, the flow becomes a natural tool that shapes, that erodes, and that smooths out the landscape. Sometimes the obvious isn't.

Sliding Away takes us back into a more serious vein with a kind of story song. The acoustic guitar song with little slide guitar thrown in is another mellow ballad that just floats along in your mind. It has the kind of free flowing melody that is perfect for a little daydreaming. Play on Michelle.

Whether it is the beginning of the journey or the end, keep in mind that anything could still happen. The final tune is another one of Qureshi's finely crafted ballads on solo guitar called **Walk at Dusk**. The tune is fashioned out of profoundly warm notes and endless possibilities. Do you have your best ideas just when the lights go out?

Female classical guitarists are on the rise, but in New Age and contemporary music, one guitarist's name pretty much stands out. Michelle Qureshi. This incredible classically trained instrumentalist has elevated her work into other dimensions and on to higher levels beyond earthly bounds. She never ceases to expand her own talents and continuously explores new musical territories. A Day on Venus is just another example of her virtuosity and attention to musical details. Of all the wonderful choices on this album however, I have to admit I was repeatedly drawn to her simple acoustical ballads. Highly listenable. - R J Lannan, ArtisanMusicReviews.com

