

john Arthur martinez

“What is it with you...” john Arthur martinez asks in the song "Cobalt Blue" - a lyric written when he was courting his wife, which could just as well be asked of martinez himself these days.

He wears a cowboy hat, but more out of deference to Texas and his ancestors, as he is no hat act. He finished in second place to Buddy Jewell on Nashville Star in its first year, but extrapolating a mainstream stereotype from that would just be wrong. He is heart and soul and defies categorization. He is erudite, world wise, and yet hasn't lost touch with his roots. He is as much at ease in a work shirt, and he is on the podium. It is time to take another look at this self-realized man.

Three years on hiatus provided time to reflect about what's important- family, friends, and song, and now john Arthur martinez reemerges. In fact, the impeccable songwriting on this new CD is a testament to that new energy and new direction. PURGATORY ROAD presents a solid collection of story- songs that flow with melody, memories, pure emotion and martinez's unique brand of Americana, infused with folk, Latin and country. Amazing songwriters abound; the company one keeps, with co-writes from Kent Finlay, Jan Landry, and Mike Blakely. He pens and partners on all but three of the tracks, Walt Wilkins and Liz Rose, John Greenberg and Bill Murray, and Vince Leggett contribute tunes of their own. The title track is a dark, downbeat twist on the murder ballad, which explores the dynamic of these rough economic times. The production textures are superb throughout, from the Latin groove of 'Que No Puede Ver' to the rolling country-rock of 'On the Run' to the rumbling, accusatory 'You Can't Out Drink the Truth'. The Texas-born martinez, who caps/un-caps his name as a nod to childhood friends and poet e.e. cummings, casts a canny eye on today's landscape, and brings a powerful set of snapshots anchored in the reality of our times.

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