

MUSIC REVIEW: Rene Marie loves wearing her 'Black Lace Freudian Slip'

René Marie, the celebrated jazz and soul singer, is a fierce, independent songstress who seems incapable of lying to her listeners. Her lyrics are carefully chosen phrases that are blunt assessments on what she's feeling, what she's thinking and what she's hoping for.

Her latest album, 'Black Lace Freudian Slip' is a strong grouping of 13 exquisite songs. It's likely one of the finest examples of original jazz in recent years and a career highlight for Marie.

I'm slightly hesitant to put anything in print about the singer. She has some choice words for the media in her title song: "Ah, the media and the critics / Blah-blah-blah in my ear / Oh, I've sat out there / But have you ever stood up here?"

These words are strong-willed and pull no punches. However, that's what makes Marie's style so invigoratingly unique. She's simply not interested in the company line; stagnation is not in her cards. Every song attempts to find new avenues to explore.

If she were to stand still and croon the standards, she would be ordinary, run-of-the-mill — still skilled, but common. So she decides to clothe herself in novelty. Marie even makes reference to this unmatched reputation: "I can't compete," she sings in "This For Joe." "I can't be a good girl / And sing standards all nice and sweet / Yes, I know what swing is / But for me that thing is incomplete / And I mean it / I won't compete / Please don't compare me to Ella or Sarah."

This freshness and out-of-box thinking is rare in the jazz genre. Too often singers enter into self-indulgent tributes to the greats, but, as far as adding their own flair to the repertoire, they are found lacking. Marie is not one of these singers. Each and every song on 'Black Lace Freudian Slip' oozes with originality. These gems feel like well-thought-out letters to a willfully disingenuous public. Her tomes are wake-up calls, freeing croons for stylistic freedom. She unravels the strictures of genre, taking what she needs from history and morphing it into a new sound.

"Rim Shot," which I found to be one of the more traditional-sounding songs, proves that Marie is not wholly pessimistic or solely coming out wielding verbal guns. She can spin a love yarn like of the best them. In this particular ditty, she dips in and out of a relationship with a drummer that catches her fancy.

Her sound is deceptively benign, while her lyrics are suggestive. "I love a drummer with a hard rim shot / It makes me tingle when he hits that spot."

Backing up the singer is an expert band, led by Kevin Bales on piano, Rodney Jordan on bass and Quentin Baxter on drums. Taken together, their rhythms find a sensual and dignified harmony with Marie's voice.

And what a voice.

It's difficult to describe, almost like some recently discovered hieroglyph. It's smooth, to be sure. But there are times when Marie lets the vocals lazily slow down and then maddeningly speed up. She's definitely in control of her instrument.

I love the slight twang that she offers to certain phrases. I'll admit I can't get enough of her singing, "I drink imported wine right out of the bottle." The phrase comes with a fury, almost blind-siding the listener. It tells you, in upfront terms, that this is not something you have heard before and don't expect this singer to be like all the rest.

Why?



Rene Marie -- Cover art courtesy of TMA

Well, because she wears a black lace Freudian slip, of course. Blah-blah-blah.

By John Soltes / Publisher / John@HollywoodSoapbox.com

- ***Black Lace Freudian Slip***
- ***René Marie, vocals***
- ***Kevin Bales, piano; Quentin Baxter, drums; Rodney Jordan, bass***
- ***Click [here](#) for more information.***
- ***Rating:*** 