

NOCTAMBULE

Every Migrant is My Fellow

Own Label NOCT005, 11 Tracks, 64 Minutes

www.noctambulemusic.com

Marla Fibish and Bruce Victor are Noctambule; Marla plays mandolin, mandola, and tenor guitar and Bruce, the guitar, bouzouki and cittern. They are joined by Christa Burch, Nuala Kennedy, Liz Knowles, Tom Neylan and Rebecca Richman.

The story behind this album is found in one page of the liner notes, which is an exemplar of urbane brevity & clarity. Some 13 years ago Marla was in a second hand bookshop, where she discovered a collection of carefree poems in the Canadian volume *Vagabondia* by Bliss Carman and Richard Hovey. Marla and Bruce set some of their poems to music and in doing so they have created a keystone album for our time.

This is one of the finest acoustically recorded albums of 2021; the sounds of mandolin and guitar in combination on tracks such as *Murmuration*, *Cecily's Waltz* and *A Sigh in a Gale/The Eagles Whistle* are intoxicating. Listen on a good set of headphones for the full resonance of their instruments to hit home.

The title track is a poem from *Vagabondia* set to music, sung by Marla who has a very musical voice. The song imagines the movement of species North as the American continent warms in spring, nature poetry in its day, now with an allegorical message for humanity.

Bruce takes the vocal on *Thousands are Sailing*, a re-working of the Andy Irvine classic. Bruce offering a slower more thoughtful rendition; it's contemplative with a hint of melancholy, after all emigration is often the final act in a long process of personal and cultural separation.

The album artwork is by Anita White, a frequent attendee at Noctambule concerts. Its colourful naive innocence is a visual metaphor for the hope that drives many people to pack up and move on to that somewhere over the rainbow.

They write, "Where the certainty of home is undermined by poverty, persecution, changing climate, famine and disease". Distilling the factors, which will compel people to migrate in this century. It's not just empty rhetoric; the duo donated half of their pre-sales orders to the International Rescue Committee. This is a moving album about movement that will move you.

Visits to their web and Facebook pages are highly recommended.

Seán Laffey