

REVIEW – CD BABY

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ULODI album of Canadian Metis Yovan Nagwetch and his band Wabanag is a good surpr

The album ULODI of Quebecois Yovan Nagwetch with his band Wabanag is a special surprise for all lovers of native American music. Yovan is a Metis of Wabanaki ancestry, a hoop of small nations located on the Atlantic shore of Canada and the USA, who has spent most of his life in Europe. Through the music, he explores his native roots. Like him, the music is “metisse” and combines the best of tradition and modernity. Hand drums, rattles, bows, wooden sticks, flutes, and other expected embellishments are used sparingly as singer-songwriter Yovan Nagwetch embed native motifs deep into songs that are richly orchestrated with nice flutes, intense vocals and strong rhythmic lines. The songs, most of them composed by Yovan himself (nine titles on twelve), are in native Wabanaki language and refer to the natural elements, the spiritual world and tribal life.

Ulodi, the introducing and closing piece of the album is a vocal song that melodises the mood of “Well Being-Happiness-Harmony”. The shamanic pulse of Yabadjasit Uskidjinudi (Life Returns Eternally), Welalin (Thank You), Apkwalnuagi (Fre Land Of Humans), Melkigenan (You Are Strong), Niskamisktuk (In The Great Spirit) put a spell on the listener. Djonetch (Little Jo), Ntelnuegadimka (In My Village), Amitola (Yonder) follow a more conventional classic rock construction, while Konawa (Barter Dance Song) – a traditional Wabanaki song - is a peaceful ballad with nice vocal harmonies, flute and acoustic guitar.

On ULODI, the whole sound is organic and without any electronic expedients. Experts will find some similarities with the new Sami music of Marie Boine on the albums “Gula Gula” and “Radiant Warmth”.