

john arthur martinez Bio www.johnarthurmartinez.net

From the Country Rendezvous in France with Mark Chesnutt & The Greencards to the Grand Ole Opry with Carrie Underwood & Charlie Pried to his birthplace of Austin, Texas with Elton John, john arthur martinez has proven his music grades well on any stage in the world. With his new release *You Play My Heart*, martinez has definitely earned himself an A. His flowing melodies carry stories told by a true Texas songwriter, with evocative lyrics inspired by wide open spaces, friends, family and the wayfarers who populate our lives in unexpected ways. Martinez's latest is filled with the spiritual and creative energy of Texas' Hill Country, where he lives in Marble Falls, west of Austin and musical influences that range from Bob Wills to Carlos Santana, Asleep at the Wheel to George Strait, from Rodney Crowell to Johnny Rodriguez.

martinez's pedigree as an Americana artist of the first caliber was already stamped well before he attracted the attention of Charlie Robison, who encouraged him to audition for TV's "Nashville Star." Martinez won second, ahead of Miranda Lambert. That opened doors to a record deal with Dualtone (*Lone Starry Night*), produced by Matt Rollings of Lyle Lovett's band, hit #49 on Billboard's Top Country Albums chart), his debut at the Grand Ole Opry on a bill with Charley Pride and Carrie Underwood, as well as several European tours and other proud moments. But martinez's roots, and his heart, lie squarely in Texas, not Nashville. His music, further nourished by his Mexican-American heritage, contains an earnestness one can't always hear in the output from Music Row.

Born in Austin, he grew up listening to his relatives harmonize on mariachi ballads and watching his father struggle to make a living as a musician before giving up that dream. Raised by his mother and stepfather on a ranch in Round Mountain, between Austin and San Antonio, martinez started publishing poems at age 9. Trying to head in a more traditional direction, he graduated from Texas State University with a degree in English and broadcast journalism (and minors in speech and philosophy) and then entered graduate school at the University of Arizona in Tucson. But he couldn't stay away from music and continued to hone his song craft in college-town coffeehouses.

Eventually, musical passion overwhelmed his plans to serve academia as a writing teacher and tennis coach and martinez began to focus on his music & writing. With *You Play My Heart*, martinez says, his career is coming full-circle. "It's time to bring people's attention back to the songwriter part of singer-songwriter," he says. This 13-track collection is filled with songs that completely fulfill that mission. And this is martinez first offering with all Spanish lyrics; "Cajita de Milagros" and "Toca Mi Corazon" are bolero in Spanish, while "Sing Me Back Home" alternates between Spanish and English lyrics — appropriate for an artist who co-wrote a song recorded by famed Texas accordionist Flaco Jiménez. "Seguro Que Hell Yes" landed on Jiménez's self-titled 1994 album — which landed a 1995 GRAMMY Award for Best Mexican-American/Tejano Music Performance.

"I'm like the menu at a Texas diner," he adds. "There's chicken fried steak; there's chili con carne-smothered enchiladas; there's the spinach veggie omelet; there's fresh pecan pie. It all comes out of the same kitchen."

It's a tasty menu, indeed. With *You Play My Heart*, listeners will enjoy every bite.