

Love, Sacrifice, Return, Redemption – Twelve Songs by Freddy Cory

By Jim Reilly

Feb. 21, 2013

What we have before us is a dozen songs written by Freddy Cory. Writing well structured, catchy, engaging pop rock songs in and of itself is a pretty grand accomplishment but these songs are more than that. They represent so much more than merely a collection of good music. Freddy's songs tell the story of love, sacrifice, compassion and redemption. He has lived this journey. His songs speak of the healing power of music and the ability for music to transcend the darkest of times to offer hope and light at the end of the metaphorical long, dark tunnel.

"BB King was my first influence," he says. "I read an article where Eric Clapton said that King was his biggest influence and to check out the *Live at Regal* album. I did and that was that, I was hooked."

BB was the starting point, but Hendrix was the real king. The electricity, the effects, the raw emotion of Hendrix struck a chord with Freddy. "The way he approached his guitar as an impressionistic instrument, his use of the tremolo arm and his Fuzz Face pedal were all big parts of his sound and they became a big part of my sound too."

As the 60s rolled into the 70s, Freddy was in the thick of it all spending his days hanging out in Laurel Canyon and his nights with his guitar on the Sunset Strip. He was hanging out with Hendrix's drummer Mitch Mitchell, playing with various groups, including *Iron Butterfly*, and well on his way to becoming a big deal in the LA music scene. But it didn't all end up going according to plan.

Through the 70s and into the 80s Freddy lived the rock and roll life. His band had some success, he wrote his own music and was the driving force behind several other projects, including some solo work. But the dark side of the music scene almost claimed him. It was almost that old rock and roll cliché: the young prodigy, full of potential, on the cusp of greatness but never quite able to make all the pieces fit before tragedy strikes. Freddy however, averted the tragedy.

"At the time I never thought I could be creative without some substance, some drug in me. But that was the time." He says. "Most of the great music of that era was completely drug induced. Drugs helped write the music. The idea was that the drugs brought you to your subconscious, unconscious mind quicker and your imagination was wider than without them. So, long story short, I ended up at the Betty Ford Center in 1984."

That's the long story short, but in order to get the whole picture, the short story needs to be a little longer.

Freddy didn't just check into rehab, he completely walked away from playing music altogether. Had he continued down the path he was on, the substance abuse would have certainly claimed his life. Both his music and his life were spiralling downward.

"I remember being in the studio and realizing that I was getting worse, I wasn't getting any better," he says. "To me it was always about the quality and inspiration of the work. That was the deal breaker. That was 1981, it was a period where I was trying to become a more commercial writer and in trying to do that I was writing worse. It's like the Beatles, when they felt they weren't getting better they stopped."

Freddy tells a story of seeing Hendrix near the end of his iconic life. "I saw him kind of dying in a way. He hated what he had become. The audience just wanted to hear Foxy Lady. I remember seeing him in concert and he threw his guitar down and said that he wasn't going to do that." Hendrix's music was getting harder and harder for him to find. Through the haze of his own substance abuse, Freddy's music was getting harder and harder to find as well.

So the choice was clear, either walk away or die. Sacrifice the music or pay the ultimate price.

Freddy walked away from music, but music didn't completely walk away from him. Even though he wouldn't touch a guitar, he moved in pretty elite musical circles. "Roy Orbison became one of my best friends," he says. "I always had good ideas for other people."

Freddy assumed the role of informal advisor but never musician. He still heard the parts, could see the bigger musical picture, but wouldn't pick up a guitar and play. Music didn't have to financially support him.

But music never really disappears and around 2010 Freddy's musical fires were stoked. Dan Chapman was working on a documentary film about his brother Emmett. Emmett Chapman invented The Chapman Stick and Freddy in the late 60s and early 70s, with his Hendrix-esque playing, played a significant role inspiring Emmett. Dan dug up some of Freddy's music for the film's soundtrack and interviewed him for the film.

The musical juices started flowing again. Freddy's old songs were cleaned up, digitized and released on CD and then another tragedy struck. He wound up in the hospital with a serious illness that almost killed him. But then, finally, after all those years, the music knocked quietly on the door and brought him back to life.

He was recuperating at his mother's house, really just lying in bed when instinct, inspiration, that little voice within, call it whatever you will, told him to start writing music again. After walking away from his guitar and his music in 1984, Freddy finally picked it back up and started writing.

“It really wasn’t my choice,” he says. “It was truly a voice from within that told me to start writing. I wrote this first collection of songs, this first album, there at my Mom’s house. It kept me stimulated, gave me something to do, literally brought me back to life.”

The pieces fell into place. “I’d get lines at 3 in the morning,” he continues. They’d wake me up. So much of the music just came to me. I can’t take credit for it really. It was for lack of better words, ‘divinely inspired.’”

Producer Rob Rappaport heard Freddy’s songs and was impressed. Rob took Freddy into The Village Studios in LA and recorded the basic tracks and after that, went to Nashville and finished the recordings.

“Rob saw something in all the songs and made them come alive,” Freddy says. “It was a year long process. He’d send mixes and I’d listen to them make my suggestions, he’d listen to every suggestion I had and we’d go back and forth until we were both happy.”

Finally after so many years, so many ups and downs, Freddy’s music is out in the world. There’s nothing in the way. The young man’s ego, creativity hampered by substance abuse, fear and doubt have all been thrown aside leaving us only with music in its truest, richest form.

Freddy and Rob caught the magic and put it in a bottle. “These creative periods come and go,” says Freddy. “We were in the right place at the right time with the right people involved to make it good. I’m glad we caught it.”

Plans are in the works to record these songs with some of the biggest names in the industry. After all this time, that seems like a just reward for this music which truly comes from and speaks to all the places, the triumphs, struggles, tragedies and victories that the best of music, the best art reflects.

Freddy has three more complete albums written. Watch for more new music soon.