

# ROBBIE DUPREE

By Helen Marketti

Photos Courtesy of Spectra Records

Robbie Dupree's name is recognized around the globe for his hit songs, "Steal Away", "Hot Rod Hearts" and "Brooklyn Girls" among others as he climbed the charts during the 1980s. His career has continued to flourish and keep renewed for the past thirty years with his quality work, which most recently saw the release of his latest EP titled, "Arc of a Romance" (Spectra Records).

The EP consists of four classic tracks that have all been carefully chosen with a common thread among them. "About a year and a half ago I had participated in a fundraiser for a couple who had been diagnosed with a serious ailment," said Robbie. "One of their requests was to have ten of their favorite songs performed at their fundraiser. I decided on "I Only Have Eyes For You" by The Flamingos. I wanted to put my own spin on a classic. They loved it and so did the audience."

Robbie continues, "I decided to record the song and then the idea occurred to me that I should do a project like this. I thought about what songs I would pick that were influential to me, think of a title and put them on an EP. This is the first time I have ever done cover songs. Part of the challenge is coming up with something that is going to tie all of these songs together. I wanted to have the title in place first then I could work on finding songs that would all have a common thread. There were weeks and months that went by during each song that was selected.

I felt I had to build upon them like links in a chain. "I Only Have Eyes For You" was a song like no other song I had ever heard before. It is distinctive and unique. It spoke to me when I first heard it at age 12 and it still does. It still has its influence even now because it still shows up in movies. I decided I would go into music when I first heard this song. I was changed forever. Other songs that I chose are "For the Love of You" by The Isley Brothers, "We Let the Stars Go" by Prefab Sprout, a band from England who was popular during the 80s and "Coronation Street" by Canadian songwriter, Marc Jordan. These songs were influential to me in some way and I wanted to keep the mood of each song. The songs cross decades and generations yet they do seem like they belong together in the same package."

Inspiration for songwriting is a continuous motivator for Robbie. "Sometimes when I am writing, it's working on my craft. Songs that I write that make it to a record can be

inspired by a conversation I had with someone or hearing another artist's song that really touched me. Songs that I write that never make it to a record are usually the ones I feel that I could never do them justice. It's like a movie script for an actor. You have to be able to play the part and find the role that is suited for you. As you get older, you are not the leading man any more. When you are a songwriter, you can sing from a point of reference of what someone else is going through," explains Robbie. "When you're younger, you're glad that you wrote songs that rhymed and all the words seemed to be in their proper place but as you get older you need to keep yourself relevant and adept to what is going on. If you can't progress as a songwriter then you question whether you have anything left to say."

Robbie Dupree's career has spanned over thirty years. Fans continue to attend his shows and buy his music from all over the world. "It has been my desire to stay in music. You have to have a deep love for this because it is a business that can beat you up. I'm not making the same kind of records that I did when I was on the charts. I always decided to choose quality for every project that I did. There are cores of fans around the world that have remained faithful to me and it's my duty to give back with quality music. If I had stopped the minute my hit records stopped, I never would have gotten to today: to where I am now.

I have learned a lot along the way from many great people. Your heroes change too in this business. When you're younger, you look up to many people but as you get older, you start to look at things differently and start admiring those who have had the longevity. Tony Bennett comes to mind. He still works on his set lists for each show. He doesn't only do the standards. He keeps things new and fresh; to an artist that is very inspiring."

Sometimes an artist would rather not sing their standard songs, which not only disappoints fans but also frustrates the artist. Robbie has an entirely different attitude when it comes to this. "The best way to address that is by a quote from a James Taylor song, "That's Why I'm Here" where part of the song says, "Pay good money to hear fire and rain again and again because that's why I'm here." "I always find new reasons for doing the songs that people like to hear. I look out at an audience and I see people singing along



or someone might tell me that they played a song of mine at their wedding, or fell in love with a song and so forth. The song belongs to them more than it belongs to me. There's a collection of songs in everyone's life by different artists and it means something to them for where they were at that moment. I am grateful that my song "Steal Away" is one of those songs for many people. The day you write a song and it goes on a record is the day you let go of the meaning of it. It's always

going to be how people embrace what they hear in their own way. At this point in my life, I think of my music as my legacy."

For more information: [www.robbedupree.com](http://www.robbedupree.com)  
Spectra Records: [www.spectrarecords.com](http://www.spectrarecords.com)  
Robbie's latest EP, "Arc of a Romance" is available at FYE, Barnes & Noble, Target, Sears and online at Amazon.com, eMusic and iTunes.



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