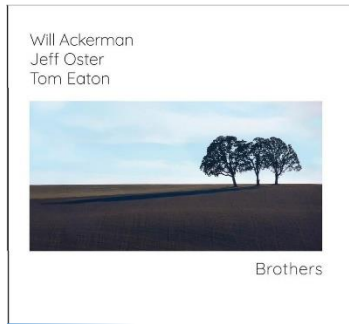


Brothers

Will Ackerman, Jeff Oster, Tom Eaton



The talented triumvirate of Will Ackerman, Jeff Oster, and Tom Eaton have created a new album of highly polished, very listenable contemporary music called **Brothers**. All three artists have shared more than an album or two with each other over the last decade. Legendary guitarist Will Ackerman, multi-instrumentalist and Master Engineer Tom Eaton, and session player and flugelhorn lead man Jeff Oster combine their substantial abundance of skills and vast experience to balance a work of eight calming, inspiring tunes. On this recording the trio always seems to find a way to musically

complement each other without tripping over the next guy or grabbing the spotlight. In most songs there is a focus without an insistent lead and I like that about the music.

The album opens with a dreamy number called **Wild Bird**. A Great White Heron, an eagle, or even a tiny chickadee all share the freedom of flight. To be above all, looking down, and seeing the world with a clear, unspoiled view. We can take our own flight while listening to this sedate, soaring tune among uplifting winds and endless skies.

There is a warm, natural tenderness about the tune **While There's Time**. Ackerman's guitar strums a background of soft sound while Oster's horn sweeps about the musical canvas adding muted colors. As the last year has shown us, time and love are precious commodities. While There's Still Time is a carpe diem tune if ever there was one, reminding us to live our dreams however we can.

Head For the Sky is layered with Eaton's poignant piano, Ackerman's gentle guitar, and Oster's evocative horn. Together, with the aforementioned delicate balance, they head up into the firmament visiting with the clouds. The music drifts in a slow circle, not lazy, but lighthearted. As you wander about with the wind, your cares float away.

My absolute favorite on **Brothers** is a tune called **Three Trees**. I probably replayed this one more than any. Sometimes music just touches you deeper than words ever can and this song did it for me. Sprinkles of piano and a touch of bass meander throughout the tune, gentle strumming and that haunting horn o' plenty seems to meld into an impression of very slow growth, but that which has the power to touch the sky.

The Confluence is many paths that, at first appear to be misaligned, but end up going in the same direction, all leading to a fantastic, unexpected discovery. The treasure in this case is serenity, a state of being that is sorely desired in our lives. The graceful, thought provoking music distills the worries, the fears, and the uncertainty out of the formula, and gives us a peace that we need so much.

It Had To Be Like That has Ackerman's parlor guitar voice a tune that creates beauty in a modern aire. It suggests that in all things that change, there is something good. You may have to wait for it or you may have to look very, very close to find it, but it is there. The song is itself idyllic. There is a gentle cascade of clear, flowing notes that wash the spirit with a fresh coating of clarity. It is contemporary pastoral at its best.

All eight tracks are so harmoniously complementary that repeating them just makes the time disappear. There is a dreamlike quality to the album that seems to open a dimensional door after the first listen. You will like being in there. Also, there is, for lack of a better term, a musical kindness to all of the songs. The music understands what you need and provides it with compassion. Highly listenable. - R J Lannan, Artisan Music Reviews