

Lars Hannibal - Michala Petri

Blue

With Agnete Hannibal Petri and Amalie Hannibal Petri



This is my first encounter with the Hannibal/Petri family's music and I have to say I am more than pleasantly surprised and delighted. **Lars Hannibal** and **Michala Petri** are a well-known duo with a lot of albums and collaborations. On this particular work Lars Hannibal plays guitar, **Michala Petri** plays recorder, **Agnete Hannibal Petri** plays cello and **Amalie Hannibal Petri** does vocals. The musical equilibrium that takes place is wonderful. The eighteen tracks on their album **Blue**, are Baroque influenced tunes with a mixture of Old world and New World charm. There is an organic quality to the music, honest, rustic, yet sophisticated in execution. The performances take on different forms. Sometimes it is an individual, sometimes a duo, trio, or a quartet.

The first cut is called **Twilight on a Ground**. Ground doesn't have the standard English meaning we are generally familiar with. It is sort of the anchoring or base. In this case bass. Lars admits to using a simple bass line as the inspiration for the song. With a lustrous classically influenced guitar theme, it starts with some bright harmonics, a little repetition of the notes, and the recorder becomes a welcomed companion to this gentle air.

The title tune, **Blue - On a Ground** with guitar and recorder, uses the same concepts. This one is a bit jazzier and complex, but uses a minimalist perception of two instruments that dance around each other and never touch. The proximity is obvious as is the emotion, but the distance is noticeable as well. More about this track later.

Springtime Sun has the quartet singing and playing in the bright light of day. It is a folksy, popular tune in which Amalie voices the theme in a sweet refrain as in a spring ritual. They all celebrate the return of warmth and the greening of the earth. You can smell the flowers and the new warm breezes of the day.

Out on the Lille Vildmose in Himmerland are the Moors. These boggy hills and fens are the gathering for heaths and fairies. **The Moor** is a solo recorder tune that is lonely and soft. This Nordic tune has the mist of the moors, the wet grass under your feet, and the enchantment of the recorder that weaves a story of the unseen. There is a tiny hint of humming, almost subconsciously in the end that closes the tune. Careful, there be magik here.

Sunset Dance is not so much as a good bye to the day as it is a hello to the night. This twilight celebration has Michala on recorder and Lars on guitar. There are many time changes and many facets of this vignette. The sun goes down in a golden fire of color, the stars wink on, and darkness finally arrives. Let us join the dance and make merry.

The Magic of Thoughts has a melancholy refrain, but the song is anything but sad. Perhaps it is the notion of being away from the ones you love that influences the mood. Amalie's poignant

vocal is light and Agnete's cello is barely above a whisper. The song suggests that love in your heart and thoughts in your mind will sustain you. But that only works for a while, doesn't it?

The last eight tunes on Blue are Danish-inspired folk tunes. One of my favorites is **Spurven sidder stum bag kvist** (Sparrows hushed behind the bough). It features Machala's crisp recorder notes and Lars' unpretentious guitar accompaniment. As in the other ethnic tunes, it sounded like a church hymn with a warm melody that is comforting and evocative. I truly liked the other Danish traditional tunes as well.

Although most of the songs on Blue maintain a deliciously Baroque style, there are other influences afoot. American Folk and early rock make an appearance, but all blends together well. Okay, Lars might have literally put blues in the title tune Blue. Once again, all the themes mix and combine into an album, more than an hour long, of tunes that gratify the listener on many levels. To me, Nordic-tinged music has always been cool as in temperature, but not cold at all. Just sublime to the Western ear. This is an instance where four talents create eighteen tracks that are quite pleasing and make for a satisfying listening experience. Highly recommended. - R J Lannan, Artisan Music Reviews