

UMA

Wishing Well



This just might be the new voice of contemporary jazz. **Wishing Well**, the latest release from the duo **UMA** is ultralight, ambient, and somehow very personal. The ten tunes on **Wishing Well** created by combining trumpet, electric guitar, and moderate percussion will be extremely palatable for many listeners. The music spans many genres with a big nod toward the electro-acoustic subgenre. Don't worry, it all works out in the end.

UMA is comprised of multi-instrumentalist/composer Aleksei Saks on trumpet, flugelhorn and Corno de Caccia. He trained in classical and baroque disciplines and earned his chops drawing on the evolution of Scandinavian trumpeting, releasing several albums, and adding to many collaborations. Estonian Robert Jürjendal, guitarist and composer, writes for all kinds of stringed instruments. Also raised from classical roots, Jürjendal is much sought after as a collaborator and writer that spans over a dozen genres of music. **Wishing Well** covers a lot of musical territory and every song is finely crafted and properly grooved. Let's throw a penny in, shall we?

The opening cut is the title tune. **Wishing Well**. It has a very light touch with a great flow. The horn takes the lead and Saks acts like the Pied Piper of Hamelin Town, only in this gig he leads you to your favorite daydream. Jürjendal's guitar is subdued, taking up the rear, but all roads lead to reverie.

The gentlemen compromise in the next cut, one of my favorites called **Old Diaries**. It starts with a lively beat and some background strings, but the trumpet and guitar balance out well on this tune that reminds you of stained pages full of well kept secrets. And like a diary you can't stop reading, **Old Diaries** is one tune you cannot stop listening to. In addition to just a great frolic, Saks creates this ethereal voice on the tune that grabs your attention.

Petite Ouverture à Danser is incredibly subdued. A muted trumpet and a shy, repetitive, harp sounding guitar phrasing make the music a child-like pas de deux. Somewhere little ones sway to and fro in their first dance. The music has a sense of tenderness mixed with just a glimmer of humor.

The sorrowful sense of emptiness prevails on the track **Longing**. It's not just distance that makes the heart grow fonder. Its time and emotion. Saks' horn is a voice in a lonely place. It is a lover hoping to hear back, to see again, and to hold her one more time. Jürjendal's guitar notes cascade like a stairway with no end. Saks' anxious tone is hopeful throughout.

Saks' expressive muted trumpet says the final goodbye on the last cut, **Beyond Skyline**. Jürjendal's pizzicato accompaniment are the stars winking in the ebony sky. The city below sleeps, but there is an undercurrent of emotion all around. It is the hour of dreamers and lovers. **Beyond Skyline** is their anthem.

I liked all ten tracks on *Wishing Well*. Musically, there is a lot of give and take on this recording and both instrumentalists seemed to have found the perfect balance. Jürjendal's guitar is crisp and mellow. Saks' horn stays cool, neither accepting the spotlight, nor rejecting it. This is an album you can play any time of the day or night, but honestly, this music flourishes in the night with the candles burning and the wine just right. The duo has several other albums and I for one will be seeking them out. You can't have too much of a good thing. Oh, and I got my wish. Highly listenable. - R J Lannan, Artisan Music Reviews