



Michael Aadal Group *Abigail*

Michael Aadal's first delicately arpeggiated minor chord sets the scene and there is indeed a modally minor inflection to the entire album. But rather than induce pathos, it lends a pensive solemnity to this spellbinding music. The band's second album, '*Abigail*' (the first was *Desertion*, 2008), portrays a journey through nature, lovingly crafted and driven by a group of outstanding musicians. Appropriately for a Norwegian production, the arrangements provide expansive breathing space and once entranced, you are transported to an ethereal world, which releases your mind from the humdrum and the hackneyed.

Aadal's guitar and **Anders Hofstad Sørås'** pedal steel guitar branch from the same tree and intertwine in captivating combinations. Throughout the album there is enchanting use of repeated and shared phrases, such as the motif first stated on '*Japan*' by **Ole-Bjørn Talstad's** always sensitive piano playing and again in the group's almost tribal vocal at the end of '*November*'. The instrumentation is like a well cast film and it's no surprise to learn that they met and first played together as students (at the University of Agder). Michael says, "Our sound is the sum of the musicians' individuality and I think that collectively, we create an original sound."

No sound is superfluous and no individual performance dominates. But there are memorable highlights such as **André Kassen's** masterfully constructed and climactic sax solo on '*The Way*'.

Home'. There is little of the traditional rhythm section on this album. Although **Audun Ramo** and **Gunnar Sæther** on bass and drums spread supportive roots throughout, they also contribute with empathic note choice as on '*Silent Creek*' and percussive nuance as on '*Redwood*'. The album closes with a second version of '*Abigail*', this time with tender lyrics and a sublime vocal courtesy of **Stein Roger Sordal**.

There was little opportunity for the band to rehearse before the recording session and many of the arrangements were conceived and perfected at the studio. This produced a live and spontaneous quality to the music and credit is also due to the people at Propeller. The album is recorded, mixed and mastered to an awesome degree of clarity. My notes have included such words as 'spellbinding', 'entranced', 'ethereal', 'captivating' and 'awesome', and they are appropriate words because '*Abigail*' – is musical magic.

David Fishel
<http://www.davidfishel.info>

Release
June 25 2013
 LOS 122-2
 7090025831225



MusikkLosen
 Tel. + 47 22 19 82 82
 Faks. + 47 22 19 81 82
 odd@musikklosen.no
 www.musikklosen.no
 www.loosenrecords.no