Ulf Wakenius - Love Is Real (2008)


Surprising adaptations of catchy melodies by the Esbjörn Svensson Trio. For more than a decade, Swedish guitar player Ulf Wakenius has been member of the legendary Oscar Peterson Quartet and the NHØP Trio. This CD was conceived of and recorded in Sweden in 2007. It is a tribute to the contribution made by fellow Swede Esbjörn Svensson, the face, composer, and leader of the Esbjörn Svensson Trio (a.k.a. E.S.T.), one of the most recognized and critically acclaimed European jazz bands ever. Tragically, Svensson died in a scuba diving mishap in June 2008. ---Editorial Reviews

"Every song here is a winner, not just for Svensson's inestimable writing, but for Wakenius' ability to interpret the songs with the perfect mix of reverence and ingenuity."

---allaboutjazz.com
Guitarist Ulf Wakenius is known for his recordings as a sideman with both Oscar Peterson and Niels-Henning Orsted Pedersen, but this session is a bit different from his earlier efforts as a leader. Focusing exclusively on the compositions of the late Esbjörn Svensson, Wakenius is removed from typical bop/post-bop settings. Joined by bassist Lars Danielsson (who doubles on cello), pianist Lars Jansson, and drummer Morten Lund, plus guests including the Radio String Quartet Vienna, trumpeters Till Brönner and Paolo Fresu, trombonist Nils Landgren, and guitarist Eric Wakenius, the leader does a remarkable job putting his own stamp on the music of his late countryman. The tense "Dodge the Dodo" gives Wakenius room to show off some Gypsy-like chops on acoustic guitar, though in a setting that blends elements of rock and modern jazz, with Eric Wakenius wrapping the piece with a piercing electric guitar solo. The gentle ballad "Believe, Beleft, Below (Love Is Real)" has a country air, while "Eighthundred Streets by Feet" incorporates classical guitar and elements of tango. Fans of E.S.T. will enjoy this tribute to the late Esbjörn Svensson. ---Ken Dryden

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