

Astrïd & Rachel Grimes – Through The Sparkle (2017)

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1. The Herald en Masse 05:29 2. M5 05:51 3. The Theme 06:01 4. Mossgrove & Seaweed 05:45 5. Hollis 06:05 6. M1 06:45 7. Le Petit Salon 06:01 Clarinet, Bass Clarinet, Synthesizer [Juno] – Guillaume Wickel Drums, Percussion – Yvan Ros Guitar, Harmonium, Synthesizer [Juno], Electric Piano [Rhodes] – Cyril Secq Piano – Rachel Grimes Violin, Kalimba, Metallophone – Vanina Andréani

Through the Sparkle is a collaboration between French ensemble astrïd and American pianist and composer Rachel Grimes.

Rachel Grimes is best known for her chamber music project Rachel's, a hugely influential group formed in 1991 in Louisville, Kentucky, releasing six studio albums between 1995 and 2005. She has also released a string of contemporary classical works in recent years on labels such as Temporary Residence. astrïd is a collective of four musicians based in Nantes, releasing records on Rune Grammofon and Home Normal.

After years of mail and email back and forth over the ocean, from Nantes to Kentucky, astrïd invited Rachel to come for a residency to make music together and play shows in France. They gathered for a few days, here and there, in 2012 and 2013 to write songs in Cyril and Vanina's home studio in the countryside.

The compositions found on Through the Sparkle glow with a unique, connected energy and a pure, instinctive musical understanding. Considered contributions from all sides allow the pieces to unfurl naturally. Each note and phrase feels like it simply couldn't be placed anywhere else in the album.

Charming, gentle and cinematic sounds are found here in abundance. Melodies circle and reveal themselves without force, allowing the listener to focus and explore the depths of what is on offer. Musically, Through the Sparkle is an expansive and evocative album. There is a presence to be felt throughout, from Cyril Secq's emotive tremelo'd guitars of M5 to the darker, more haunting mood of The Theme, to the tension in Mossgrove & Seaweed. Strings and woodwind coalesce around intricate piano and guitar movements creating a wealth of harmony and melancholy.

Through the Sparkle is a record of miniature symphonies, of elegant restraint. A gracious and generous offering from a group of musicians at one with each other and at the top of their game. ---gizehrecords.bandcamp.com

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