

Detour Ahead

Steve Abshire / Paul Wingo
Patuxent Music CD 192
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Guitarists Steve Abshire and Paul Wingo join forces here to pay tribute to two departed friends. Herb Ellis and Barney Kessel were members of “The Great Guitars” with Charlie and Joe Byrd. They also made their individual marks as legendary players over brilliant and lengthy careers. Abshire and Wingo honor their contributions to the genre in this collection of jazz standards.

Ellis would stay at Abshire’s home when performing in the Washington, D.C. area. This time spent together helped to infuse the Abshire sound with a bluesy quality reminiscent of Ellis’ approach. While there are similarities in phrasing, Abshire has his own distinct and solid voice and sound.

The liner notes describe Wingo as being the Kessel of this duo. Barney Kessel was known by his fellow musicians as a player who stretched his abilities to the limit. No musical phrase that he heard in his mind was untried. Sometimes the technical ability fell short, but the musicality always made up for that issue.

Abshire and Wingo are joined on this CD by Dave Wundrow (bass) and Phil Cunneff (drums). The quartet manages to take the listener through some very enjoyable music. The guitar harmonies and arrangements are well crafted. Wingo and Abshire alternate interesting solo lines and solid accompaniment for each other.

Selections include originals from Kessel titled “Here’s That Sunny Day” and “A Salute to Charlie Christian.” Ellis compositions showcased here are “Detour Ahead,” “Outer Drive” and “I Told You I Love You, Now Get Out.” Abshire contributes his funky “Blues for Herb and Barney.” Other titles are “Jitterbug Waltz,” “Stuffy,” “Laura” and “There Is No Greater Love.”

Fans of mainstream swing and blues alike should find this recording a place in their library. It is a well done production coming from two quality players and people who are helping to keep traditional jazz guitar alive.

Reviewed by: Vince Lewis
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