

CD Review

'Oka Vanga' by Oka Vanga

Reviewed by Debbie Catt

With a strong Appalachian feel and an intriguing mix of musical influences, the self-titled album from Oka Vanga is vibrant, lively and uplifting.



This blend of Americana and British folk is the third album from versatile duo Angie and Will - vocalist and songwriter Angela Meyer and guitarist William Cox. Originally from South Africa, Angie met Londoner Will at an open mic night, found instant music synergy. Combining their range of musical styles, this highly skilled guitar duo quickly caught the attention of the guitar community. They performed at acoustic clubs and festivals, then in 2013 they were invited to represent the UK at the International Madame Guitar Festival in Italy alongside big name guitar stars such as Ralph Towner (USA) and Clive Carroll (UK). They released their debut album '*Pilgrim*' in 2014.

Listening to this latest album is almost a physical experience with its bold, spirited rhythms and zesty mood. We're treated to eight songs and four instrumental traditional tunes and the energetic foot stomping pace and variety are delivered using a clever blend of strings, frets and percussion. I loved them all.

Folklore and family are clearly deep influences in the theming, and along with Angie's stirring lyrics there's more than a hint of a barn dance atmosphere that is mighty uplifting. Guest musicians Patsy Reid (violin, viola and cello) and John Parker (double bass) also provide impressive contributions, adding to the enjoyment.

There's some creative mixing by LA producer Thomas Johansen and it was mastered by GRAMMY Award-Winning Mastering Engineer Steve Fallone at Sterling Sound. Most of the recording was done at Unit Studios by Nick Kuzoch before the Covid lockdown, then to make sure the album was completed on schedule, Angie and Will rigged up their spare room to record the last four tracks themselves.

Visit <https://okavanga.com> for more information about Angie and Will, their albums and latest tour dates. You can also find them on Twitter and Facebook.