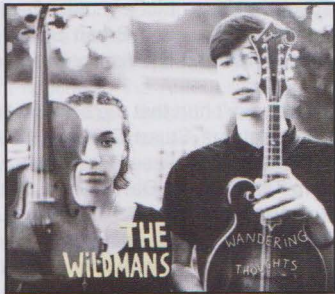


THE WILDMANS
WANDERING THOUGHTS

Patuxent Music
CD 302



Enter the young brother and sister duo, Eli and Aila Wildman. Their talent is without question. It shines through on their debut recording throughout a selection of eight standards in thirteen tracks. Both Eli, who plays

MARCH 2018

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some exceptionally clean and attacking mandolin, and Aila, who displays an equally adept prowess on the fiddle, have raced ahead to levels of proficiency only seen in the top players of thirty to forty years ago. However, there are many playing on this level right now, and the real question is does the music here entertain?

Predominantly yes, with about half being standouts and the rest are solid. Each player has their moments. Eli is at his best on "Wheel Hoss," one of three tunes associated with Bill Monroe, though Monroe didn't play it in this modern style. His original instrumental "Timeless" is also pretty good, based around a repeating figure that is quite propulsive and hypnotic. He does have a rather thin tone and does overdo the double-time passages,

particularly on "Grey Eagle," but those don't detract much.

Aila is at her best when she takes the lead on "Bluegrass In The Backwoods" with great command and presence. She's very good throughout the recording, but this is her most impressive. She also sings on three tunes and while quite developed vocally for her age, does betray some youth in over-singing a bit. The slow country weeper "It Takes One To Know One" is by far the best, though "Darlin' Corey" has some nice energy.

Joining The Wildmans on the project are banjoist Victor Furtado, guitarist Danny Knicely, and bassist Mark Schatz. (Patuxent Music, P.O. Box 572, Rockville, MD 20848, www.pxrec.com.)BW