



## Helge Lien & Knut Hem Villingsberg



### Music For Inner Wandering

What leads two musicians from the Norwegian countryside to fall head over heels for country and jazz? For Knut Hem and Helge Lien, their love for these genres goes back so far that they find it hard to explain. Perhaps they don't have to: Using just piano and a Weissenborn guitar, they sculpt a timeless sound that conjures up images of endless planes, feelings of freedom and nostalgia. Concepts mean nothing here, emotion is everything.

Eschewing song structures and vocals, these pieces are atmospheric and dreamy, they make use of the harmonic vocabulary of jazz, while occasionally hinting at ambient and film music. What seems like an eclectic mix is simply the result of following passions that have led the duo for decades. Hem discovered the "psychedelic maximalism" of folk icon David Lindley in the 80s, when a country craze hit Norway. Lien, meanwhile, grew up with traditional folk music, before discovering a sense of kinship with Keith Jarrett and Bill Evans.

The duo are not the only Scandinavian artists to develop a fascination for Country, Bluegrass and Americana. Journalists have come up with clever genre names such as "Nordicana" to try and capture this movement. But although Hem and Lien share influences with these acts, their style feels like a distinct own branch within this fascinating scene.

At fifty minutes, they have created an epic canvas, one which feels pleasantly endless. It is music for inner wandering, a cosmos of solitude, in which the silence behind the notes is as important as the actual sounds made.

Or perhaps, at its very core, *Villingsberg* is just about two good friends playing the music they love.