

"Linus+Skarbø/Leroux is a massively captivating session from past Wondering Sound Pick of the Week, guitarist Ruben Machtelinckx, who, along with saxophonist Thomas Jillings, create the duo Linus. As with other projects, Machtelinckx brings a number of different instruments belonging to the guitar family, and Jillings does the same with the reed instruments. Joining them for this session are Frederik Leroux and Øyvind Skarbø. The former's arsenal matches that of Machtelinckx, while the latter adds a nice dose of percussion and some nifty waves of Hammond organ, which, along with Jillings' modicum of synthesizer, adds some hazy atmospherics to rustic music. It's a blend of folk, electronic, jazz and, well, experimental, I suppose. It's serene as all hell, but possesses lots of quirks and jagged edges to bring out a lively personality. The song "Down" accompanies a brisk cadence with a chipper bounce, and it provides all kinds of handholds for strings and sax to launch bits of melody. The quartet's brief flirtation with chaos only brings further attention to the song's prevailing tranquility. "Finco" adopts a similar approach, but the tempo is one made for effortlessly coasting across. "Porch," on the other hand, has the accidental tempo of sporadic rain tapping against a tin roof. The sense of melody seems equally random, and that is the song's strength and its charm. "Sketch" is the rustle of brittle Autumn leaves, kicked up by a stiff breeze. "Woodstock" is a ray of sun shining down upon it, warming the surface of everything it touches. "LaBoeuf" is the most cohesively tuneful song on the album, with a pretty melody to lead the way and a straight-forward rhythm to help shepherd it along. A little twang and a few growls just draw out a bit more personality from the tune. There are three faux interludes on the recording. The first brief piece, "Vaag," opens the album with a peaceful drone. "Vlaag" is placed near the middle of the album, and also features a drone, but one that swims in atonality. The album ends with "Vraag," a piece situated somewhere in between those two extremes. It's a lovely way to round out a terribly lovely album."

Dave Sumner, Bird Is The Worm, recommended (11/04/2015)