



Wild Rice

an acoustic romp in the jazzgrass

Artist: Paul Bourdeau & Shane Simpson
Title: Wild Rice
Release Date: January 2004
Label: Independent, Segment Multimedia
Catalogue#: SEMM200201-2
Genre: Jazz-Bluegrass, Jazzgrass
Formats: CBC, Jazz, College, Community
Barcode: 776127207423



Background:

Paul Bourdeau and Shane Simpson have worked together on a variety of projects over the past two decades – from standard jazz electric duo to acoustic excursions into blues and popular music. In the summer of 2003 the duo performed at the Montreal Jazz festival as part of the Acoustic Series – which led to the recording of **Wild Rice**. The recording captures the spirit of true improvisation - every track was recorded "live off the floor" at Segment Studios over a two-day period in August 2003.

Bourdeau, who penned 9 of the CD's 12 tracks, is a musical impressionist. Standing on a long lonely road in Alberta led to the rousing crowd-pleaser **The Beiseker Road**. A Nova Scotia shoreline inspires the cheery fiddle tune **Cape North**. The birth of a nephew is transformed into the haunting and beautiful lullaby **Zachary**. A desire to write "a piece Django Reinhardt might have played" results in the upbeat, jazzy, **Arlechinno**. And the title track is as much a tribute to blue-grass legend **Tony Rice** as to the abundance of wild rice in the ponds of rural Ontario.

Simpson's energy and humour shine through not just in his playing but also in his own contributions like the catchy and spirited **Malcolm's Manifesto**. By contrast, the moody and mesmerizing **I Believe You Now** reveals a darker, dreamier side not unfamiliar to fans of his solo work.

Although **Wild Rice** is an amalgam of musical styles such as jazz and bluegrass, the overall sound is unified and surprisingly rootsy. The production, which is crucial to the success of such an all-acoustic venture, is first-rate – a credit to the golden ears of veteran producer **Ross Murray**. Simpson played a key role in ensuring the final product reflected his vision for Wild Rice, consulting heavily on both the production and final mix. Lush and crisp, it all "sits just right" in the speakers, thanks to the efforts of mix engineers **Dave Bignell** and **Ross Murray**.

With great playing, great picking, great production and great tunes, **Wild Rice** isn't just a great independent CD: It's a great CD -- period. Check it out.