

# ACT

## Ulf Wakenius Solo

### Momento Magico

ACT 9565-2

German Release Date: March 28th, 2014

**The unceasing quest for those magical moments in music is what drives jazz musicians to do what they do:** "I was blessed to experience such moments in my work with wonderful artists like Oscar Peterson, Herbie Hancock, Pat Metheny, Youn Sun Nah and others," recounts guitarist Ulf Wakenius. And that is what the new album "Momento Magico" is all about – those rare and extraordinary moments outside the bounds of time and space that stay with you throughout an entire musical life.

**In recent years, Wakenius has made the biggest impact at the side of vocalist Youn Sun Nah.** Not many star guitarists would voluntarily cede into the inevitable role of accompanist to the "secret queen of jazz" (Süddeutsche Zeitung), who is not only a star in her adopted homeland France: Wakenius dedicated the title track to her and the magical moments they shared together; a number that combines "Frevo", which they often played together, with Mozart. And at least two other pieces would not have ended up on "Momento Magico" without this collaboration: for example the silkily Bossa-robbed "Gnossienne", the tune by Erik Satie, whom Wakenius has admired for so long, dedicated to their joint France manager Axel Matignon. And the closing chanson classic "La Mer" by Charles Trenet, that Wakenius renders as a minimalistic, extremely delicate ode to the beauty of France.

**Humility pervades the entire album of the Swede,** who is otherwise such a showman – especially live: his percussion excursions on the strings are legendary, as are the many flourishes at the end of "Blues For Oscar", his homage to Oscar Peterson, in whose quartet he played for ten years. Here, Wakenius concentrates entirely on the acoustic guitar, on researching its natural sound, which in its diversity is veritably made for lending a new lease of life to the widest range of magical moments.

**And as with the pieces named above, Wakenius dedicated each song on the album to a companion,** friend or influential person, and that means that it is inevitable, for a Swedish jazz musician of his generation, that this begins with Esbjörn Svensson. The moving "Ballad For E." by Svensson's life-long friend and percussion accompanist Magnus Öström, per se of unadorned beauty, condenses to a pure essence at the hands of Wakenius. Just like "Liberetto" honours the beauty of the compositions by bassist Lars Danielsson, with Wakenius' unmistakable, polyphonic ballad style, with bodiless bass notes and delicate scale runs.

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**Wakenius' way of playing has always been inspired and pervaded by not only American jazz, but also world music.** For this reason, the forms of folk music that are most important to him are also dedicated tracks on "Momento Magico", all of which self-composed: "Hindustan Blues" smacks of raga, with Wakenius' typical syncopated rhythms and Indian guitar sounds; "Mali On My Mind" is reminiscent of the birthplace of the blues in West Africa. "The Dragon" endeavours to transfer the sound of the Chinese pipa instrument to the guitar, and succeeds with a vengeance. "Esperanto" integrates influences from Greece, Russia and the Middle East.

**While the above would already be enough material for several albums for other musicians,** it is just enough to get Wakenius going. In the touching "Requiem For A Lost Son" he reminds us of the son of his great colleague John Scofield, who died at just 26 years of age. A nimble "Preludio" is dedicated to Keith Jarrett, the jazzy "Notes For OP And Wes" to Wes Montgomery, the, as Wakenius puts it, "ultimate genius of the jazz guitar" and it reawakens the experiences with the legendary Oscar Peterson Quartet, "that changed my life". "Sugar Man" is inspired by the documentary film "Searching for Sugar Man" by the Swedish documentary filmmaker Malik Bendjelloul about the life of the long missing singer/songwriter Sixto Rodriguez, who moves continually back and forth between America, Africa and Australia. This floating folk song for several parts, permeated by a bluesy lead voice, lasts just two minutes, and yet in this short time it displays the entire spectrum of Wakenius' virtuosity, which he places entirely at the service of music.

**What Wakenius has created here out of his memory of so many magical moments is definitely capable of giving the listener a few as well.**

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Photo by Lennart Siöbera

- 01 **Ballad For E.** (Magnus Östrom) 4:46
- 02 **Momento Magico** (Ulf Wakenius) 4:51
- 03 **Liberetto** (Lars Danielsson) 3:36
- 04 **Hindustan Blues** (Ulf Wakenius) 4:16
- 05 **Requiem For A Lost Son** (Ulf Wakenius) 3:17
- 06 **Mali On My Mind** (Ulf Wakenius) 2:28
- 07 **Gnossienne** (Erik Satie) 3:02
- 08 **The Dragon** (Ulf Wakenius) 2:13
- 09 **Esperanto** (Ulf Wakenius) 3:54
- 10 **Preludio** (Ulf Wakenius) 1:46
- 11 **Notes For OP And Wes** (U. Wakenius, W. Montgomery & B. Johnson) 6:13
- 12 **Sugar Man** (Sixto Rodriguez) 2:04
- 13 **La Mer** (Charles Trenet) 4:18

Produced by Ulf Wakenius & Lars Nilsson

Recorded August 26-27, 2013 at Nilento Studio, Gothenburg  
Recorded, mixed and mastered by Lars Nilsson

Production team at Nilento Studio: Jenny Nilsson, Michael Dahlvid & Joakim Nilsson

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#### More Ulf Wakenius on ACT:

- Ulf Wakenius, Lars Danielsson & Vincent Peirani "Vagaboond" (ACT 9523-2)
- Ulf Wakenius "Signature Edition 2" (ACT 6005-2)
- Ulf Wakenius, radio.string.quartet.vienna a.o. "Love Is Real" (ACT 9459-2)
- Ulf Wakenius, Lars Danielsson & Morten Lund "Notes From The Heart" (ACT 9435-2)

**Ulf Wakenius** / steel string, nylon string  
& bass guitar (all acoustic)

#### Distributor:

Allegro-Nail Distribution (US)  
A&N Music (GR)  
Andante Music (RO)  
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