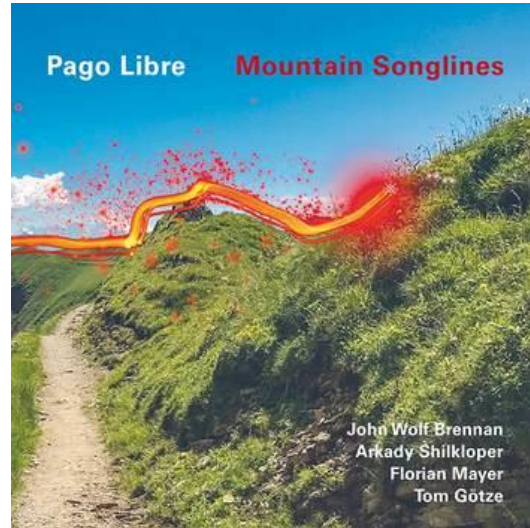




JazzViews, London, September 2020



## **PAGO LIBRE – Mountain Songlines**

**Leo Records CD LR 886**

*Arkady Shilkloper, horn, alphorn, alperidoo (an adapted alpenhorn/didgeridoo); Florian Mayer, violin, voice; John Wolf Brennan, piano, arco-/pizzicatopiano; Tom Götze double bass, voice; Sonja Morgenegg, yodel, Track 9, voice Track 12*

*Recorded at Hard Studios, Winterthur, Greater Zurich, Switzerland, 19-20/02/2020*

The leader here is John Wolf Brennan and it seems likely that his very broad background and very wide range of interests contribute hugely to the extensive gamut of musical notions and approaches that he brings to our attention. He has studied film, literature and musicology, piano, organ, conducting and composition (this latter at CMS, Woodstock, New York. This was The Creative Music Studio, a study centre for creative music in the 1970s-1980s, founded by Karl Berger, Ingrid Sertso and Ornette Coleman). Brennan has written musical material for acoustical environments, dance, installations, orchestras, sound sculptures and theatre. All this as well as teaching, tutoring and running workshops and of course he is an active member of several international groups. Born in Dublin and living now in Weggis, Lucerne, this latter location must provide the model for the occasional Alpine/mountain-folk sounds one hears (German is the official local language) but the far-reaching penetration surely belongs to his Celtic roots, a subject which remains a personal interest for him.

The little bit of Euro-Alpine that I hear is gimmicky to me, but its echo is erased almost instantly by the utterly, lithely melodious, delicately pronounced and intensely inventive musical dissertations, such as have earned Brennan such wide commendation as an outstanding, avant-garde musician.

Hats off too, to the entire quintet of players for their altogether interwoven coherence, which keeps everything together. All manage perfectly their inexorable roles, with delicacy and verve, swift enthusiasm, fluidity and charm. The entire project deserves every accolade it earns.

**Reviewed by Ken Cheetham**