

Aisha Duo

Quiet Songs

ObliqSound (OS 502)/ ★ ★ ★

Andrea Dulbecco (vb), Luca Gusella (mar), Glen Velez (frame drum) and Marco Decimo (clo). Rec. Sept. 2003

Inspired by melodic percussionists David Friedman and Gary Burton, Aisha Duo is an Italian vibraphone and marimba outfit playing improvised chamber music with a dash of jazz. In practice, it comes across like the hippos-in-tutus sequence from *Fantasia*: bubbly, slightly absurd and surprisingly entertaining. There's a dream-like, "moonlight in the nursery" feel here, helped along by interpretations of eight of Chick Corea's "Children's Songs" - wide-eyed evocations of childhood innocence. As well as there's a fair smattering of the duo's own delicate, fairytale confections too, which tend to work best when bolstered by Marco Decimo's operatic cello and, particularly, Glen Velez's frame drums - hand-held percussion instruments related to the tambourine or the Irish bodhran that give the tunes a rickety momentum not unlike the ramshackle creations of hobo composer Harry Partch. Recorded in a 17th century church in northern Italy, this album has spacious poise and hushed charm that deserve to be heard.

Daniel Spicer