

Review from Akustik Gitarre in Germany

TIM SPARKS & JAMES BUCKLEY

Jukebox Dreamin' (Acoustic Music Records)

In the jukebox Roy Black can stand next to the Stones. In Tim Sparks' dream collection of today, you will find the most wonderful of all the enigmatic and dreamlike Beatles beauties, 'Strawberry Fields Forever', followed directly with Merle Hagard ('Mama Tried'). But wait – this is no x-any other fingerstyle album. On the one hand, the Ameri-can has brought double bassist James Buckley on board and, on the other hand, has taken off his magnificent Charles Hoffman custom steel string in such a way that he is sounding towards an archtop with a floating pickup. In this surprising tonality one may not immediately recognize the opener 'Homeward Bound'. But that's also because Sparks so cleverly reharmonizes the catchy tracks, giving them a touch of jazz without losing their true nature. And this process, in turn, provides the deep joy that this work ultimately conveys: Everything receives musical added value; the longer you listen to the album, the more you become aware of the breathtaking guitarist sovereignty in these seemingly casually downplayed arrangements. It also becomes clear why James Buckley is here: his flexible bass groove allows Tim Sparks to enjoy the wonderful sin- gle-note improvisations that also put the old finger picker further into jazz than anyone would ever have expected.