



NEW ALBUM **AKOUSTIKOS VOL.1** (CNI, ITALY)
BY [AGRICANTUS](#)

Review by Russel Higham – Songlines Nov. 2018

Agricantus Akoustikòs

CNI Records (58 mins)



*From southern Italy to the
Sahara desert*



Blending their southern Italian roots with influences and instruments from Arabia, North

Africa and the Touareg people of the Sahara, Agricantus have been making what used to be called New Age music since 1979. With innovative use of electronica, often borrowing from ambient and trance, the band's work has even made it on to a compilation by mainstream chill-out masters Buddha Bar. On this excellent new release, featuring many new arrangements of their existing repertoire, founding members Mario Crispi (on vocals and wind instruments) and Mario Rivera (on vocals and six-string acoustic bass) are joined by accomplished jazz singer Anita Vitale, who also plays Fender Rhodes piano. Together with fellow Italian percussionist Giovanni Lo Cascio, they inject verve and pizzazz into rhythmic numbers such as 'Azalai' and 'Cantu Errami'.

Hauntingly effective use of Oriental instruments such the Egyptian *ney* (flute) make many parts of this album more of a Nile cruise than a Roman holiday. On slower tracks such as 'Sentu' and 'Sentimentu', Vitale's voice has a South American touch to it, adding even more associative layers to this complex, well-crafted and highly enjoyable album. *Akoustikòs* is guaranteed to have you searching the band's back catalogue for more.

RUSSELL HIGHAM

TRACK TO TRY *Azalai*