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Smooth Jazz®

Week Of: January 12, 2009



Carol Archer

Teetering, Towering Stacks Of New Tuneage

We chime in a brand-new year with just shy of a dozen intriguing new tracks Going For Adds next Monday. Crowning our alphabetical list is the stellar, high-energy, musically exhilarating title track from L.A.-based session guitarist **David Boswell's** third project, "I Like That" (My Quiet Moon). This former protege of Pat Metheny, Jack DeJohnette and Dave Holland is supported impressively by no less than the Yellowjackets' blazing bassist, Jimmy Haslip; saxman Nelson Rangell; drummer M.B. Gordy; and new age piano meister John Boswell ... Guitarist **Eric Essix** returns with his 13th and finest work to date: "Birmingham" (Edcllectic/Essential). There's a marvelous authenticity to Essix's compositions throughout, particularly on the lead track, "Shuttlesworth Drive." His nuanced technique is the very embodiment of "smooth" ... Check out emerging songwriter/producer/keyboardist **Bobby "Funkee Boy" Tamaro's** surprising mid-tempo debut single, "Body Music" (Funkee Boy) -- a sleeper ... I believe it's common knowledge that I'm an avid longtime stalker -- er, I mean devotee -- of Incognito and leader Jean-Paul "Bluey" Maunick, so I trust everyone will understand why I'm over the moon for Francis Hylton's fabulous remix of "I Remember a Time" (Heads Up) from the CD "Tales From the Beach," a project that sent Bluey on a vision quest to the world's most beautiful beaches, poor guy. Talk about captivating! I'd add this tune in a heartbeat, for if I could do anything as well as this fabulous track's hook, production, lyrics and lead vocal sound, I would be the Empress and Bluey would be my minion. Sadly....

Granted, 1966 was an indelible moment on the cusp of change in American history, but just as scads of core smooth jazz P1s, I remember the first time I heard the Mamas & the Papas' 1966 debut smash, "California Dreamin'," like it was yesterday. I always approach covers of my all-time favorite songs with trepidation, but songstress **Lori Jenaire's** swingin', sultry version (Nouveau Bleu) delivers big-time, down to a creative cop of the original flute solo. Recommended ... Speaking of change, as everyone is, what about guitarist **Matt Marshak's** brilliant homage to Martin Luther King Jr., "Brotherhood" (Nuance)? This astonishing song is a musical and emotional experience that you feel as much as hear; a hit, too. It has simply

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DAVID BOSWELL

"I Like That"
(My Quiet Moon)

DAVID WELLS

"Disco Kid"
(Nuance)

ERIC ESSIX

"Shuttlesworth Drive"
(Edcllectic/Essential)

FUNKEE BOY

"Body Music"
(Funkee Boy)

INCOGNITO

"I Remember A Time"
(Heads Up)

LORI JENAIRE

"Californina Dreamin'"
(Nouveau Bleu)

MATT MARSHAK FEAT. DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

"Brotherhood"
(Nuance)

MILES STIEBEL

"Sir Duke"
(MSE)

REGGIE CODRINGTON

"Sunny Days"
(Hitshack)

VIBES ALIVE

"After Hours"
(Swingding)

WALTER BEASLEY

"Steady As She Goes"
(Heads Up)

everything going for it: amazing songwriting, fantastic playing and a great vibe -- the works. Furthermore, every cent of the proceeds will benefit the estate of the man PBS and PRI host Tavis Smiley routinely describes as "the greatest figure in American history," Brother Martin. I recommend "Brotherhood" for an out-of-the-box Add.

While smooth jazz has never embraced even such violinists as Jean-Luc Ponty, don't overlook **Miles Stiebel's** rollicking cover of "Sir Duke" (MSE). I suspect you could be pleasantly surprised, as the track's as tight as a clenched fist ... Speaking of surprises, check out saxophonist **Reggie Coddington's** upbeat "Simple Days" (Hitshack), a little gem tucked away among inspirational songs on the CD of the same name ... Listen to the return of **Vibes Alive feat. Jeff Lorber** ("His Royal Badness") and an all-star cast, including Luis Conte, Vinnie Colaiuta, Jimmy Johnson, Gary Meek on sax, Bob Summers and Putter Smith -- whew! The vibe-y and aptly named "After Hours" (Swingding) merits full consideration ... And last, but not least, Berklee professor of music **Walter Beasley** serves up another course of his signature sensual sax sound -- another wonderful offering, "Steady as She Goes" (Heads Up) -- and another hit. So much great music, so little time.

I wish you and yours the happiest, healthiest of new years; happy listening, too. Please reach out to me anytime at 323-954-3419 or carcher@radioandrecords.com.

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