

MATT MARSHAK - GROOVOSPHERE



Guitarist Matt Marshak's third disc is one with lots to offer. It's a breath of fresh air in a time when so many are sounding alike. He writes as well as produces all fourteen cuts here with nice production qualities throughout. On board are talented musicians from many of today's top bands. The mix keeps it all interesting, and there's a lot here to offer most everyone.

Groovosphere gets started nicely with an up-tempo melody called "New York Avenue."

It has that Second Avenue feel to it or a New York jazz club on the east side. The repetitive chorus is addictive and creates a playground for Marshak's guitar. Tower of Power's David Mann adds a lot of good sax work to spice this opener. "Montauk Moon" opens as a reflective tune with Matt on acoustic. The bass line picks up the pace slightly and punches this one down the New York coast. Mann's soprano offers the third voice and plays off the acoustic and bass. "Always" is pure chill and features the vocals of De'adre Aziza. The sound is dark with light edges of keyboard. Matt's guitar plays through the mix and is a major contributor to the chorus.

"Summerfunk" is the one you're probably hearing a lot right now. It's the first single, and after hearing it you understand why. Horn syncopated riffs along with driving bass make this the perfect ride for Marshak's fat guitar. This one should carry the artist to the next level and is catchy with just enough punch to make you want more. "Windchill Factor" has a New York chill sound to it. There's a lot going on outside Matt's guitar with added voices of keyboards and drum programming. They are a nice mix that gives a modern sound to the cut. "Across The Pond" is heavily laden with a techno programming bass line that serves as a layered background to catchy guitar riffs. "Could It Be You" is another catchy one that will be a head bopper this summer at his shows. Vocals intertwine throughout with Matt's guitar and the strong bass of Kenny Harris. The fun continues on into "Summertime." It has the same mix of vocals and guitar. Mario Cruz' sax plays between the two.

The haunting "Big Skye Dream" plays reference to the Montana wilderness and the desire to go there. Marshak's guitar reverberates through most of this one along with some crafty programming. Touches of flute and sax spice the mix. "Mood Man" jumps off the page and sounds like a great live number with the horns taking the early lead giving way to Marshak's guitar. Tim Reguisis' bass drives most of this one. The chorus is a melodic little ditty that you'll be humming long after this one is finished. The totally solo piece entitled "Honestly" closes out the disc.

As many people who have seen this artist open for Peter White, Spyro Gyra or Stanley Jordan can attest, the third time could be the charm for this New York native. You can catch him at the Capital Jazz Challenge at the Capital Jazzfest this month. *Groovosphere* is a step in the right direction, and there's a lot here to like. Be sure to find a copy soon.

- Harvey Cline