

Thomas Marriott - Both Sides of the Fence

Contributed by Rick Holland

Personnel: Thomas Marriott Trumpet & Flugelhorn; Marc Seales Piano & Fender Rhodes; Jeff Johnson Bass; John Bishop Drums; Joe Locke Vibes (2 & 9); Hadley Caliman Tenor Saxophone (8)

Tracks: Both Sides Of The Fence; So Near, So Far; The Ninnen; Summer Night; New World A Comin'; Sky Dive; The Breeze And I; What The Mirror Said; Tones For Joan's Bones.

Thomas Marriott

Both Sides of the Fence

Seattle trumpeter Thomas Marriott's new release *Both Sides of the Fence* reveals a talent that performs with taste and beauty that is not afraid to light the fire under his horn. Marriott is joined by a variety of high profile musicians from the Seattle area. First you have Joe Locke on vibes (a partner in a quartet they have together), veterans John Bishop on drums, Jeff Johnson on bass, Marc Seales on piano and Hadley Caliman on tenor.

This session reveals not only the talent of Marriott, but also a group of musicians that play with a wonderful group concept. No doubt having Bishop and Johnson is a great start. They have played with one another for years, and can be heard on a variety of Origin releases. Add Marc Seales and Joe Locke to this mix, and you have a rhythm section that plays very cohesively and musically. Hadley Caliman who makes a brief appearance on *What the Mirror Said*, is a soulful and expressive player, and a Seattle jazz icon that more people should know about.

The thing that stands out to me about Marriott, is his wonderful trumpet and flugel sound. He is also an instrumentalist who has also developed a very proficient technique. Maybe the best news yet is, he is a player that uses these talents to play musically. His sense of harmonic awareness is excellent. He also has a wonderful sense of the musical phrase that will remind some of players from a previous era, such as Art Farmer.

The compositions that were chosen on this disc were also well conceived. The music displays a wonderful sense of musical contrast. For this reviewer, this is what makes Both Sides of the Fence an excellent listen. For example, the opening track, Both Sides of the Fence, is an exciting swinging up-tempo composition that shows off Thomas's sense of flow harmonically. His time is concise, and the group plays cohesively. On the other side of the fence, you have tunes like Skydive and The Ninnen, that are compositions that feature a fender-rhodes based rhythm section. These tunes took me to an era that is often forgotten by many. I feel this music really suits Marriott with his rich, warm sound and he is able to embrace the melodies these tunes provide.

Tones for Jones Bones is another tune you do not hear as much from this present day group of musicians. But it enhances Joe Locke's presence on vibes, and again Marriott fits himself nicely to the repertoire.

So, Near, So Far (a 3/4 swing) and The Breeze and I are also nice melodic selections. Add New World a Comin' a harmon trumpet ballad, which is played beautifully, and you have 9 tunes that give a listener 9 glimpses into the world of artist Marriott. I'm impressed by Thomas's sense of taste and music that yearns for melody. And why not, if you have a great sound, present that sound over music that lends itself to beauty.

Thumbs way up for this new release!! If you like trumpet jazz, accompanied by a mature and sensitive rhythm section, you're going to dig this new Origin release.

For information about the music of Thomas Marriott, please visit:

www.marriottjazz.com