



Khiov Music LP 43051
John Scofield: This Meets That

Format: 2LPs 180g 33rpm / gatefold sleeve
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Manufacturer: Khiov Music

Original label: Emarcy

Genre: Jazz "This Meets That" finds guitarist John Scofield looking both backward and forward. It's his first recording for the Emarcy label, but for the occasion Scofield resurrected the trio he'd used on several previous albums, most recently 2004's "EnRoute": bassist Steve Swallow and drummer Bill Stewart. Never one to rest on his laurels, Scofield has throughout his career applied his virtuosity to several different streams of jazz, ranging from fusion-esque to orchestral to straight bop. "This Meets That" is something of a mixed bag. The opening track, the Scofield-penned "The Low Road", is a swinging funk jam that's one of several tunes on the record to employ a four-piece horn section. It's a smoker of a track, with Scofield often teasing with distortion but never straying so far away that it might be called unmelodic. In addition to the Scofield originals, three left-field cover songs demonstrate Scofield's ability to apply his technique and imaginative thinking to just about anything he chooses. Perhaps one shouldn't be surprised that a musician always looking to expand his reach would try his hand at squeezing a classic country hit into a jazz framework, but that's what Scofield does on the old Charlie Rich ballad "Behind Closed Doors". It's a sweet, bluesy take and Scofield maintains a pure, clear, non-ironic tone as he explores the song's nuances. The album-closing "(I Can't Get No) Satisfaction", from the Rolling Stones' songbook, is treated much the way Otis Redding once did, as a forceful soul stomper (albeit with brilliant soloing), and "House of the Rising Sun", a traditional blues recorded by dozens of diverse artists, but perhaps best known from the Animals' 1964 hit, veers far from its familiar melody as Scofield plays tag with guest guitarist Bill Frisell and Stewart and Swallow race around each other and the two stringmen. "Heck of a Job", its title an obvious reference to President Bush's much-ridiculed "heck of a job, Brownie" statement in the wake of Hurricane Katrina, does use as its foundation a rhythmic base that could have come from New Orleans' Meters, while "Strangeness in the Night" isn't that strange at all, with its stop-and-go rhythm and punchy interplay. "Pretty Out", however, is pretty out there, not quite anarchic but open-ended and frisky. "This Meets That", as its title implies, is less of a thematic album than some of Scofield's more recent endeavors, but it's one that reminds listeners that both his chops and sense of adventure are not only intact but still growing.

"This Meets That" - John Scofield, Bill Frisell (g); Roger Rosenberg (bs, b-cl); Lawrence Feldman (ts, fl);

Jim Pugh (tb); John Swana (tp, fgh); Steve Swallow (b); Bill Stewart (dr)