
ZACH LARMER ELECTRIC BAND: INNER CIRCLE

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In listening to Inner Circle, one is struck immediately by the originality of guitarist Zach Larmer's tone and style. Leading his Electric Band on this CD, Larmer performs music that ranges from fusion to post bop jazz without ever sounding like any of his predecessors.

The Miami-based guitarist heads a group that includes keyboardist Tal Cohen, Juan Pablo Diaz and Jermaine Walden on bass, and Rodolfo Zuniga as well as David Chiverton on drums. Along the way trumpeter Brian Lynch, saxophonist Aldo Salvent and John Daversa (on EVI and trumpet) make important appearances, but the focus is primarily on the guitarist and his core quartet.

The set begins with "On The Dock" which has a funky bass line, tricky rhythmic accents, some EVI, and plenty of fresh ideas from the guitarist. Larmer plays quite lyrically on "Garden Of Eden." The piece evolves gradually while retaining its opening mood, becoming high-quality fusion with the sound of rock and the improvising of jazz blending together naturally.

"Same As It Ever Was" is a wistful piece that is a bit mournful, featuring excellent playing by Larmer and Salvent on tenor. The bluish "Inner Circle" is both catchy and complex, highlighted by some rollicking moments.

Zach Larmer is heard at his most passionate on "I Left It Bayou" which finds him pushed and inspired by the bass patterns. Larmer's explorative solo, one of his best of the set, is particularly individual and creative. "Friedrichshain" has Larmer sharing the spotlight with Brian Lynch. The solos and tradeoffs between guitar and trumpet are quite colorful and heated. Inner Circle concludes with a lengthy version of the set's lone standard, "Softly As In A Morning Sunrise." At a tempo that is much slower for this song than usual, Larmer really gets to stretch out, sounding both relaxed and spontaneous.

Inner Circle is an impressive set by Zach Larmer, a guitarist who has started his recording career on a high level.