

# Mp3 Jeff Hellmer Trio Featuring Rick Margitza - Peak Moments



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Modern jazz with originals combined with fresh looks at standards. Features Miles Davis alumnus Rick Margitza. 9 MP3 Songs JAZZ: Traditional Jazz Combo, JAZZ: Weird Jazz Details: "Peak Moments" is Jeff Hellmer's second album to date, and it might just be the pianist's best effort yet. The album features one of the hottest lineups of musicians anywhere: John Fremgen on stand up acoustic bass, drummer AD Mannion, and Hellmer on piano. To top things off, powerhouse tenor saxophone player Rick Margitza sits in on the session, and the results are nothing less than simmering. Hellmer's playing on "Peak Moments" is hard swinging and fiercely original - deviating between long, lushly creative phrases in the upper register and low, pumping melodic forays into the pockets laid down by Fremgen and Mannion, a rhythm team whose work here is eerily flawless. Margitza's playing is excellent as well; from the very first song (Cole Porter's "What Is This Thing Called Love?"), the saxophonist spirals up into progressively more complex layers of improvisation, peaking with the classic standard "All the Things You Are," played here by the band in a new, refreshingly spontaneous way. Every good jazz album must have at least one ballad, and here Hellmer chooses the lovely Leonard Bernstein tune "Some Other Time." This tune is rarely covered outside of Bill Evans' "Waltz for Debbie" album, but Hellmer makes the piece his own, playing a lushly expressive solo that soars into several beautiful sequences in the upper registers before touching down into the melody again. Hellmer's album should be considered an exciting addition to the modern jazz piano catalog. --Alex Arcone-All Music Guide Austin still may not yet be renowned for its jazz scene, but the few jazz albums that do come out of our fair city each year tend to be substantive, noteworthy projects. A case in point is this rock solid date from pianist and UT jazz professor, Jeff Hellmer. When not toiling in the rarified hallways of academia, Hellmer can be found gigging around town

as an active member of the local scene. His articulate and unpretentious playing has made him, in particular, a favorite accompanist among Austin's jazz singers. For this date, Hellmer has enlisted world class saxophonist Rick Margitza, a recording and performing alumnus of Miles Davis, who breathes fire when necessary, but here sticks primarily to unfettered mainstream fare. His presence alone lends the session an extra level of credibility that's often missing from local recording endeavors. Besides the requisite standards, compositional chores are spread around with Hellmer providing "Peak Moments," while Margitza adds "Heart of Hearts" and "14 Bar Blues," both of which appeared on his recent album on Palmetto Records. Bassist John Fremgen contributes the lovely ballad, "Song for Laurie," which also provides him some instrumental space. It's impossible to talk about this session without mentioning the recent passing of veteran drummer A.D. Mannion, whose death coincided with the release of the album. Austin's jazz drummer of choice, an impeccable musician and the consummate team player, Mannion felt this was his best work to date. He'll get no argument from this quarter, and will be dearly missed by the jazz community, and indeed, his untimely passing will forever lend a bittersweet aura to this memorable project. - Jay Trachtenberg--Austin Chronicle

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