

Mp3 Thomas Barth - Seven Worlds



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A breezy and absorbing excursion into a world Barth refers to as "EnerJazz" -- a sound and philosophy that transcends cultural barriers in favor of global synergy and solidarity. 9 MP3 Songs JAZZ: World Fusion, WORLD: World Fusion Details: Liner Notes (Bill Milkowski, Jazz Times) Keyboardist-composer Thomas Barth is one of those rare individuals who actually got to realize his dream in this lifetime. Seven Worlds is proof of that. Consider the long odds: Barth was living in Austria at the time he conceived of this project. As a classically trained pianist from Vienna who had also taken master classes with jazz greats Herbie Hancock and Joe Zawinul, he was more than up to the task musically. Plus, his understanding of marketing gave him an added tool in making this project happen. With those key factors under control, Barth turned his attention to sidemen. But rather than relying on the hippest players on his home turf, Thomas went after the impossible dream: former Miles Davis sideman Mike Stern on guitar and the former Zawinul Syndicate rhythm section of Mike Baker on drums and Gerald Veasley on bass. Through a combination of naivete and single minded conviction, involving a barrage of faxes and long distance phone calls, Barth was able to land each of these heavyweights for his own maiden voyage. Add saxophonists Craig Handy and Evan Tate to the mix and you've got the makings of a dream team. Miraculously, they had never played together before but the chemistry clicked in their intensive sessions together at Platinum Island studios in New York City. Stern is featured on the opening track "Friends", a beautiful ballad that showcases the guitarist's penchant for lyricism and drama and includes a nice bit of trialogue with guitar, bass and keyboards. "Stepping Out" is a hard-hitting beat-oriented romp with Thomas outfront wailing with fuzzy-edged synth tones while "After The Prayer" conveys a more ethereal Mysterious Traveller vibe behind Mike Baker's emotive vocals. Zawinul's influence is also apparent on the scintillating title track, with its sinewy Middle Eastern lines on the intro and joyous world beat energy

bearing the stamp of the Weather Report founder. Zawinul's former bandmates Veasley and Baker even commented on the "Joe vibe" that they had all conjured up in the studio during the recording of "Seven Worlds." As Thomas explains, "It's hard not to be influenced by him. But the challenge here was to pay homage to Joe without getting too close to his orbit." While homage is apparent, Barth clearly establishes his own identity on both of these tracks through his personalized 'singing' approach to the keyboard. "Turquoise" is a seductive smooth jazz feature for tenor saxophonist Craig Handy. And the three-part "Manhattan Suite," particularly the third section, is an opportunity for Handy and Stern to unleash on a heavy groove laid down by Baker and Veasley. The tense, high vibrancy of this pulsating track captures the essence of the city itself. Barth considers this extended piece to be a work in progress and plans to add an urban edge to the suit with rappers and DJs. His beat-oriented version of Stevie Wonder's "I Wish" should register with radio programmers while the touching "Gentle Souls" is more close to home. This soothing track employs sampled whale sounds that when transposed up an octave take on the characteristic of a newborn baby's cry. Nadeen Holloway, a New Yorker living in Vienna at the time, is the featured vocalist on this profoundly personal track. Barth credits Erich Zawinul, Joe's son, for being the catalyst in putting this dream band together. And Thomas, wisely, left the music open enough so that it would take on a life of its own once the musicians met in the studio to begin dealing. "The ultimate concept of that record was to write the music with the players in mind," he says. "And it was a first time working situation for everyone. So the vibe and the feel of the music had to be a perfect mesh, because we didn't have a lot of time to waste." After the sessions went down in four sleepless, exhilarating days and nights in the heart of Manhattan, Barth was overjoyed. "Those were the most energetic and passionate four days of my life," he says. "Everyone was into the music and the spirits were high all the time." Now transplanted to the Big Apple, Thomas Barth plans to immerse himself in the Manhattan jazz scene he so admires. Meanwhile, there is Seven Worlds to savor. Barth's success is our gain.

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