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Mark Mosley: TLC

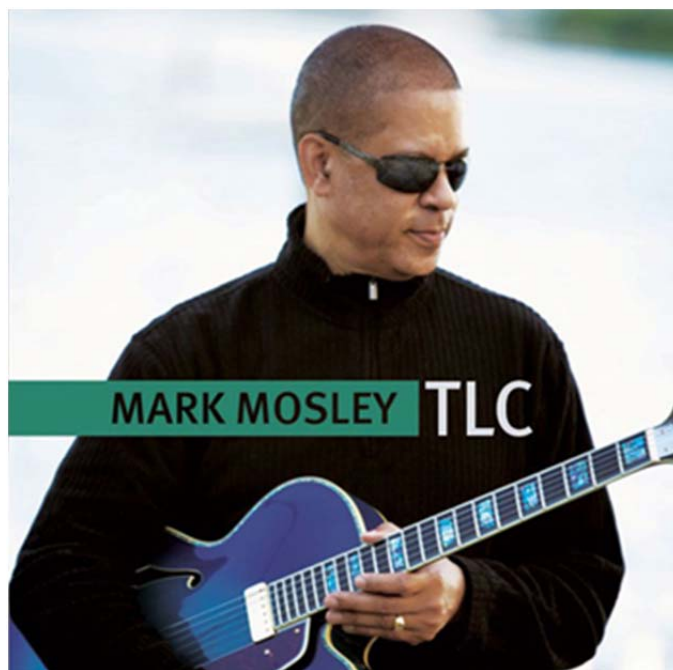
www.guitaristmarkmosley.com

TLC is a well written and musically performed smooth jazz album by East Coast guitarist, composer and arranger Mark Mosley. Though smooth jazz tends to get picked on in the same music community, especially among straight-ahead jazz musicians, when done right, the genre can produce listenable and entertaining tracks that fans of musical styles outside of jazz can relate to. Following in the footsteps of masters such as George Benson and Earl Klugh, Mosley produces an album that is easy to digest, while maintaining a high level of musicianship and creativity.

As a guitarist, Mosley moves between the traditional jazz and contemporary jazz worlds with ease. His work on tunes such as “Good Vibes” and “Sweet Love” showcase the guitarist’s ability to lay down a simple, yet engaging melodic line. Some tracks like “The Real Deal” feature Mosley in a more traditional jazz-guitar quartet setting. On others, Mosley digs deep into his bebop and hard bop vocabulary, twisting and turning through the blues changes, resulting in some of the album’s strongest moments.

The arrangements for each track are written with careful attention to detail and with enough variety in the instrumentation and timbre to keep things interesting throughout the record. The only detraction that one might find with the album is that sometimes the arrangements seem a little too layered; not to the point of distraction by any means, but there are certain moments when the strings, keys and horns sound a bit heavy in the arrangement.

But, while some listeners may find these occurrences to be a bit over the top, others will no doubt enjoy the interplay between Mosley’s guitar work and the background instrumentation. In all accounts Mosley does a commendable job with the arrangements, providing something for everyone at different moments throughout.



TLC is a bit of a departure from Mosley’s previous work, but it is a move that doesn’t seem forced or in any way brought about by an attempt at commercialization. Yes, this album is meant to be jazzy and at the same time accessible by a larger audience than a traditional jazz-guitar album might be, but this new direction in Mosley’s playing seems natural. No matter what genre or style a musician might decide to pursue, it is the intent and musicianship that make the music successful, and Mosley nails both throughout the record.

Review by Dr. Matt Warnock