

Mp3 Eric "scorch" Scortia - The Tone Generator

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Grooved out jazz with a blues feel, kickin bass. The latest release. The Dallas based organ quartet features Eric Scortia known by his fans as "Scorch" on the mighty Hammond B-3 organ, Marchel Ivery-Tenor Sax, Andrew Griffith-Drums and Clint Strong-Guitar 11 MP3 Songs in this album (78:48) !

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The original Hammond organs used a mechanical system to produce the individual pitches called tone wheel generators. Sometimes, leakage happened -- causing the organ to produce harmonic overtones, which was just what the doctor ordered to some jazzers. It has become a major part of the Hammond organ sound. Organist Eric Scortia generates tone and more from his vintage 1959 Hammond B-3. Yet thats not all... Theres the all-important component known as groove -- and he is a master when it comes to generating that elusive element for all to hear. On this, his fourth release, Scorch returns with a vengeance to remind one and all that he and his compadres came to play -- and that is exactly what they do over the course of these eleven selections. Although home ported in the greater Dallas-Fort Worth area, Eric Scortia is a man of the world, well-traveled over the course of his career and aware of the job opportunities outside his domestic parameters. In the annotation to his last project, Singled Out (Organ-ized 4007) the emphasis was placed on his hometown and regional activities over the years, while here the story continues and will concentrate on a more national and even international overview. Aside from a busy private teaching schedule, Scorch is a full-time working musician around the region and has been known to accept engagements far from home. Friend and fellow Texan Stevie Ray Vaughan recommended Scorch to be the keyboardist with the Austin-based blues/rock combo, Omar and the Howlers. Omar and The Howlers were the opening act during Vaughnans Live Alive and Soul to Soul tours. Scorch performed alongside SRV when he would sit in with the band. When Omar and The Howlers signed a major label record deal with Columbia (now Sony) they soon appeared on the Arsenio Hall show, MTV, Miller Lite beer commercials and Canadas Much Music Network. There soon followed gigs in Germany with Los Lobos and Joe Cocker. In 1987, Omar and the

Howlers won top place in the Best Blues Band category at the Edison Awards in Holland, which are Europe's answer to our Grammys. Eric is currently a voting member of the Recording Academy better known as the Grammys. While with Omar and the Howlers, Eric gained valuable studio experience. He eventually recorded at the famed Capitol studios in Hollywood and at Ardent studios in Memphis, to name a few. He did radio interviews in Paris not only while he was a Howler, but later on when touring with sax-ace Johnny Reno. Scorch has jammed onstage with some of the legends of our time John Lee Hooker, Little Milton and Bo Diddley, not to mention the late Dewey Redman and Wynton Marcellas on the jazz end. While opening up for Bob Dylan in San Antonio, Dylan walked up to Scorch, stuck out his hand and said Bob Scorch replied, its an honor to meet you man. Scorch also had a rare opportunity to play and write a song on John Lennons Imagine piano. During the Texas Blues Cruise, he opened for Jimmy Vaughans Fabulous Thunderbirds and later made tours with them in Europe. To say he is a well-traveled musician would be an understatement. At this point, a few words concerning Eric's worthy constituents as the immortal Charlie Parker used to say. The lone holdover from the last release is definitely one of the Scorchers mainstays, the perennially under-rated Marchel Ivery on tenor saxophone. They first hooked up just after the organist had graduated from high school and his band Vital Organ was the opening act for the Red Garland quintet (of which Marchel was a member) at a south Dallas nightspot named the Arandas Club. A hardbop heavy-hitter firmly in the Texas tenor tradition of David Fathead Newman, Arnett Cobb, James Clay, Don Wilkerson and others, he constructs solos consisting of lean, mean lines packed with more licks than a five pound lollipop. It is a testament to Eric Scortias inventory of skills that their musical camaraderie has existed so long. His album Marchels Mode with Dallas piano legend Cedar Walton on Leaning House Jazz is highly recommended if you can find it. Where Henry Johnson played the guitar on Singled Out, his able replacement here is Clint Strong. A musician for all seasons, Strong has spent the last ten years as lead guitarist for country icon Merle Haggard. Something of a child prodigy, he recorded with Willie Nelson at age nineteen and has played all facets of American music most of his life. He was asked to play the great Wes Montgomerys guitar when it was on exhibit in Big D -- and did so. He can name check a multitude of eclectic playing situations from Ray Price to Joey DeFrancesco. Clint is steeped in that southwestern guitar heritage exemplified by fellow Texan Herb Ellis and Oklahoman Barney Kessel in jazzdom and is not afraid to spice his solos with a smidgeon of twangy flavoring employed by pioneer players like Merle Travis and Hank Garland. Strong proves, to paraphrase

the Duke of Ellington, it dont mean a thang if it aint got that twang. As one of the first-call drummers in the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex, Andrew Griffith keeps plenty occupied. Yet that hasnt stopped him from performing regularly with Eric Scortia for over a decade now. An unassuming sideman, Griffiths timekeeping abilities are as reliable as an expensive Swiss watch. He is confident enough to just sit back and propel the rhythmic flow for as long as needed. He sets up a percussive punctuation that accents the soloists declamatory points like tattooed exclamation marks. His bandstand credits include the late, great Brother Jack McDuff and Joey DeFrancesco among many others. And by the way -- Andy hails from Texas, not Mayberry. Now we arrive at the heart of the music, the selections. My B-3 buddy Oscar likes his organ sounds both ways - fast and faster And thats what you get here. No rhapsodic ballads or weepers, no ten minute plus slow blues, just moderate to brisk pulses delivered with equal parts joy and intensity. We dont need no stinkin tearjerkers, this is a party album that doesnt insult your ears. The playlist can be divided into four sections: popular titles, rhythm blues numbers, soul-jazz items written by fellow organists, and a standard. The first category is represented by a 1962 hit, Comin Home Baby written by a jazz musician (bassist Ben Tucker) with lyrics courtesy of jazz singer Bob Dorough. Scorch emphasizes the catchy bass line on a version that sports hot solos from the front line. The other two pop chart-toppers are from later in the decade, 1967 1969, respectively. Bobbie Gentrys Ode To Billy Joe has been recorded instrumentally before, most notably by King Curtis. Erics gang gives it a good working-over with Scorch building to a frenzy on his statement and Clint getting lots of opportunities to utilize his southwestern twang and some chords near the end that sound almost emitted from a pedal steel. Son Of A Preacher Man appeared on the famed Dusty In Memphis album by Ms. Springfield. The leader takes the melody setting the mood and listeners are advised to pay close attention to his bass lines under the series of solos and throughout this lively take. Next is a pair of R&B tunes, one that crossed over and one that didnt. From 1968, Think was a biggie for Aretha Franklin, who also wrote it and turned down the first chance to record the Dusty Springfield song above. Its taken as a medium-paced boogaloo here, with good solos from all. Also close rhythmically, Let The Music Take Your Mind is off of the debut album from Kool The Gang. A bomb when it was originally released, it is now recognized as something of a classic of the oeuvre. It is a testament to the musicianship of this quartet that they can make such interesting musical comments over this basic one chord vamp. Listen to how Marchel almost quotes Saber Dance during his ride. The most plentiful compositions herein are the five soul jazz numbers from respected

organists. Oklahoma City's own Chester Thompson is responsible for Mr. T from his only release on the Black Jazz label called Powerhouse. Organ and guitar play the infectious line through the first time with the tenor being added for the second, while later on down the line Eric does some serious screaming over a chord sustain. Clint Strong really shines on his spot on Leon Spencer's The Scorpion, which is a shade mellower. There are three scripts from one of Scortia's favorites, Charles Earland. Off the self-titled Black Talk, the tune has stop-time verses that allow Ivery, Strong and Scorch to talk the talk and walk the walk. The medium-up We Are Not Alone has an unusual two-part construction that affords all three plenty of meat to chew on with the leader layering his solo for maximum effect. Spinky is straight-ahead and quick. A lone standard wraps things up with some hardcore swinging of a very effective arrangement by Eric incorporating some counterpoint. Griffiths brushes set the tempo, which is this side of furious. Then, after the head, tenor, guitar and organ all speak their piece before Andy abandons his metronomic pulsations to trade some four bar percussion fills with all three before returning to the song line. These guys shoot the old warhorse full of jazz steroids and send it off to the races. Much has happened since our last audio message from Scorch and the Vital Organ band. Our hero completed his studies and graduated from the University of North Texas School Of Music. Now, free of scholastic restraints, he is ready to rumble. Listen to what he says about the session: We set up in a circle with no headphones. That way, we would have good eye contact because I wanted to record with no overdubs. We were loose and cracking jokes. It's mostly first takes. It took about four hours: including loading and unloading, a coffee break, and time out for a couple of buckets of fried chicken. This is how we sound live, take it or leave it, this is the real deal. By the time one reads this, a state-wide smoking ban will have happened in the state of Texas. It is uncertain how this will affect Lone Star musicians whose bread-and-butter are the area restaurant/club gigs, but one thing is for sure -- Eric Scorch Scortia will be heating up the bandstand and generating a hot organ tone, while burning and smoking for sure. Larry Hollis Cadence Magazine

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