## Eric Marienthal - Turn Up The Heat (2001)



*1. Everything She Wants [04:28]  2. Lefty's Lounge [04:03]  3. One Day In Venice [04:08]  4. Takin' It To The Streets [03:57]  5. Love Don't Live Here [04:38]  6. Sugar [04:28]  7. San Marcos Square [04:23]  8. Rendezvous [04:35]  9. Hold On [04:01]  10. Hangin' On The Boardwalk [04:51]  11. Remember Our Promise [04:34]*    Personnel includes:  Eric Marienthal (saxophone);  Alan Harris, Deniece Williams (vocals);  Chris Botti, Jerry Hey, Gary Grant (trumpet);  Bill Reichenbach (trombone);  Bill Heller (organ, keyboards);  Russ Freeman (keyboards, acoustic & electric guitars);  Rick Braun, Jeff Lorber (keyboards);  Fred Clark, Robben Ford (guitar);  Dave Carpenter (acoustic bass);  Alex Al, Vail Johnson (bass);  Dave Hooper (drums);  Rafael Solano (percussion).

Anyone who remembers Eric Marienthal's work with Chick Corea's Elektric Band in the late '80s and early '90s knows how exciting an improviser he can be. Unfortunately, many of the saxophonist's own albums have been disappointing; Marienthal has often been content to play mediocre background music -- and most of the time, Turn Up the Heat fits that description. This could have been a great album; with musicians like guitarist Robben Ford, trumpeter Chris Botti, and keyboardist Jeff Lorber on board, it wouldn't have been hard for Marienthal to deliver a gem. Instead, the Californian (who is heard on tenor, alto, and soprano sax) offers an unimpressive, predictable blend of pop, R&B, and jazz that is tailor-made for NAC/smooth jazz radio. Grover Washington, Jr. and David Sanborn are prominent influences, but for the most part, this CD lacks the passion and creativity of their best work. Turn Up the Heat is an ironic title for this album because most of the material sounds like it was designed to fade into the background at your local shopping mall. Nonetheless, the disc has its moments. Botti has an enjoyable spot on Stanley Turrentine's "Sugar," and "Love Don't Live Here" (one of the few tracks that isn't an instrumental) is a pleasant, if unremarkable, urban/adult contemporary item that features singer Deniece Williams. Also noteworthy is Lorber's funky "Hangin' on the Sidewalk," which finds Ford taking a gritty guitar solo. Is Turn Up the Heat terrible? No, but it's usually mediocre -- and a musician with Marienthal's skills should never settle for mediocrity.
---Alex Henderson, Rovi

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