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Mark Elf Returns 2014 Jen Bay Records 2014

Some things are well worth the wait and after eight years, Mark Elf is back and bringing it!

Brent Black / www.criticaljazz.com

Mark Elf is no stranger to critical acclaim despite the fact some of you may not be readily familiar with the name...If you can pull together a rhythm section for the second time that includes David Hazeltine, Peter Washington and Victor Lewis then credibility is the least of your worries. How about having your home and life ravaged by the insidious storm that was Hurricane Sandy, happened to Elf and thanks to Kickstarter he is back better than ever with Returns 2014!

Mark Elf plays clean and strong but with a subtle texture of flavor and comp work that allows this all star 4tet to soar on original tunes such as "A Little Diddy" along with "Jacky's Jaunt" (penned for his sister) and Michellie's Mambo which is a smoldering swing also penned for another sister that sadly passed away in 2010. Elf tosses in a little variety using the baritone guitar on the blues "Low Blow." As mentioned, the rhythm section rides this groove relentlessly and the end result is a joyous celebration of the creative process no matter what obstacle life places in your path. The closer "Sandy's Song" is somewhat of a conceptualized autobiography inspired after this devastating storm destroyed Elf's home.

Returns 2014 is beauty, swing, and an articulated percussive pop all captured on a shiny silver disc. Flawless. This is why I review music.

Tracks: A Little Diddy; It Was So Beautiful; Jacky's Jaunt; Time On My Hands; Michellie's Mambo; Low Blow; Titillating; The Bottom Line; People Will Say We Are In Love; The Sandy Effect.

Personnel: Mark Elf: Guitar; David Hazeltine: Piano; Peter Washington: Bass Lewis Nash: Drums: Steve Kroon: Percussion (Michellie's Mambo).