



MARK DOYLE

Watching the Detectives: Guitar Noir III FREE WILL RECORDS

This is apparently the third album of a series that guitarist/arranger/producer Mark Doyle initiated twenty years ago exploring TV and movie themes having to do detectives and spies, while avoiding obvious and overdone themes like “Peter Gunn” and “Perry Mason” which was on his first album in the series back in 1999. Doyle’s career extends back to when his band the Jukin’ Bones was signed to a contract and has included significant studio work as guitarist or producer.

On this album, he plays guitars, keyboards, bass and drum programming along with Josh Dekaney on drums and percussion and a string section that he conducted and arranged. Opening with a medley of Elvis Costello’s “Watching the Detectives” with the themes from “Get Smart” and “The Untouchables,” he brings a Ventures meets Link Wray meets Roy Buchanan approach set against a rock-oriented backing to explore the melody as well as the dramatic implications with his phrasing and tonal manipulations. It is fascinating to hear him develop improvisations on “Kojak Theme” as well as the theme from “Man From U.N.C.L.E.,” where his organ adds contrasting tonal colors. A particularly arresting selection is his original “Thirteen Crimes,” with the counterpoint of his guitar with strings set against a hard rhythm.

Not every track derives from a detective or spy media theme. There is a splendid ballad reading of Frank Zappa’s “America Drinks and Goes Home,” with lovely guitar and lush strings. It adds to the variety of a most fascinating and atmospheric recording.

Ron Weinstock