CD Reviews for *Jazzwise* -03.29.2002

**Russ Spiegel**
**TWILIGHT**
Double Moon Records DMCHR 71026

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With each successive album release over the past five years, guitarist Russ Spiegel has taken several further steps towards the front of the stage. After several busy years working the circuit in Germany with organist Barbara Dennerlein's trio and fronting his own small groups and a fine big band, Spiegel has now moved back home to take on the challenge of the New York scene. This CD, recorded in October 2000, is an effective postscript to his time in Europe. Overall it has a relaxed, confident air - due in no small part to a fine rhythm section but also to the leader's skills as a composer and arranger. Jazz classics such as *Giant Steps* and *Jeannine* sit comfortably alongside his own compositions such as the straight-ahead *Brothers Grimm* or the dramatic acoustic guitar/piano duet *Peaceful*. Dennerlein's probing Hammond sound underpins *Number One*, a minor blues penned by Spiegel, which also showcases the soloing strengths of trumpeter Christian Meyers and alto and tenor saxophonists Derrick James and Jürgen Seefelder. Together with bassist Thomas Stabenow, Meyers is also featured on the title track *Twilight*, an atmospheric 3/4 ballad. Spiegel plays with a clear, bright sound and his solos reveal a sure-footed rhythmic instinct and a harmonic sense which may be rooted in bebop but which also leans towards the future.

-Charles Alexander
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