



Book of Sound

Ivo Perelman/Matthew Shipp/William Parker (Leo)

Medicine Buddha

Billy Bang/William Parker (NoBusiness)

The Vancouver Tapes (feat. William Parker)

UDU CALLS (Long Song)

by John Sharpe

Long a fixture of the Lower East Side scene and the annual Vision Festival, by now bassist William Parker should need no introduction. His presence on a date guarantees restless momentum, which nonetheless adheres to the traditional values of swing and time, albeit in constantly changing permutations. For Parker, free music means that you are free to do whatever you want with no limitations. The only criterion is that it has to work. Three new discs present Parker in a range of settings, all meeting that standard.

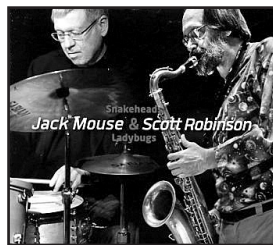
Parker has been part of a revolving cast of trusted collaborators flanking tenor saxophonist Ivo Perelman on a stream of releases over the last few years. On *Book of Sound*, pianist Matthew Shipp completes the lineup for an invigorating program of six improvisations from an October 2013 studio session. Both Shipp and Perelman are distinctive stylists, who, nonetheless, operate within the syntax of jazz, if not the overt structures. Their collective experience liberates them to explore whatever path they choose, secure in the knowledge that the response will be simultaneously supportive but unpredictable. Shipp and Parker don't miss a drummer at all, combining in a rhythmic quilt that both prompts and responds to Perelman in a push-pull tension. That's well illustrated in "Adsumum", where Shipp's nagging motif pulls Perelman into its orbit while Parker runs interference with a twisting contrapuntal line. This is some of Perelman's most relaxed and powerful playing, often eschewing his trademark falsetto for gruff reiteration and breathy lyricism. Parker shines especially when his upper register sawing intertwines in sweet consonance with Perelman's outpourings, nowhere more so than in the closing of finale "Veritas Vos Liberabit".

Medicine Buddha captures a 2009 recital from the Rubin Museum of Art, reuniting Parker with effervescent violinist Billy Bang. Notwithstanding Bang's essential joie de vivre, the beginning of their concert is low-key but starkly beautiful as Bang soars achingly over Parker's portentous scraped drone. It's an arresting opening, all the more compelling for being completely extemporized. The most effective moments come when both men are wielding their bows. Parker is a past master at imaginative yet propulsive underpinning and he partakes in abstract interplay with Bang throughout this set. Like his early mentor Don Cherry, he also absorbs influences from outside jazz and varies the pace on Japanese flute, inspiring Bang to pluck oriental-tinged pentatonic patterns on "Sky Song", and dous'n'gouni on "Bronx Aborigines" in hypnotic consort with Bang's thumb piano. Parker's final "Buddha's Joy" finds Bang dancing around the author's infectious groove and rightly elicits rapturous applause. This set forms a fitting tribute to Bang, who died in 2011.

The Vancouver Tapes documents Parker's appearance at the 1999 edition of that city's Jazz Festival, his first-ever encounter with the Italian pairing of drummer Tiziano Tononi and reedplayer Daniele Cavallanti. A generous 76-minute program encompasses two sets, revealing a threesome who punch above their weight in a rousing free jazz bout. Milanese Cavallanti and Tononi are longtime colleagues, waxing homages to Rahsaan Roland Kirk, Don Cherry and Ornette Coleman, though perhaps

best known as mainstays of the Instabile Orchestra. Parker's multidirectional propulsion, abetted by Tiziano's widescreen drumming, allows Cavallanti to take off in whatever direction he wishes, most usually energetic Ayler-inspired overblowing. The trio also quotes liberally from Ayler's songbook, notably at the conclusion of "Shadows Of The Night". Each set follows a similar trajectory, from an atmospheric start featuring Cavallanti's flute in tandem with Parker's insistent bowing through to spirited, even ecstatic, interaction. Audience conversation intrudes towards the end to betray the origin as a bootleg tape, but the slightly murky sound doesn't disguise the chemistry between the threesome.

For more information, visit leorecords.com, nobusinessrecords.com and longsongrecords.com. Parker is at Greenwich House Music School Feb. 21st with Rob Brown and The Stone Feb. 25th with Warren Smith. See Calendar.



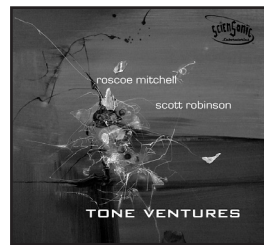
Snakeheads & Ladybugs

Jack Mouse/Scott Robinson (Tall Grass)

Tone Ventures

Roscoe Mitchell/Scott Robinson (ScienSonic)

by Ken Waxman



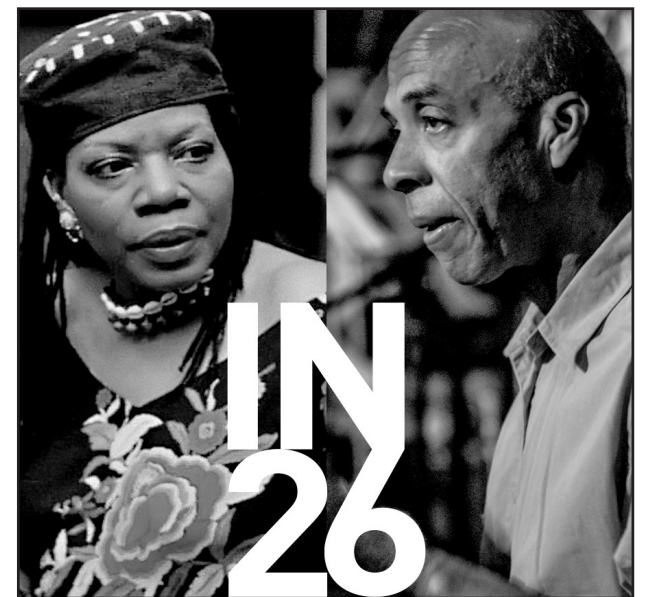
Scott Robinson has spent more than 30 years proving that one can be a jack of all trades and a master of all. Having gigged with associates as different as Buck Clayton, Joe Lovano, Marshall Allen and Lionel Hampton, he's more than adaptable. A crusader for obscure instruments, Robinson is proficient on such sound makers as the C-melody and bass saxophones, contrabass sarrusophone and baritone rothophone as well as cornet, clarinet and tenor saxophone. Like a tailor's showroom mirrors, these duo CDs illuminate various facets of Robinson's sonic versatility.

Having played with Stan Kenton, Clark Terry, Gary Bartz and Peanuts Hucko—to pick random names—drummer Jack Mouse's resourcefulness is never in question. However, his dozen short duets with Robinson on *Snakeheads & Ladybugs* are freely improvised, without being free jazz. Imagine what would have resulted had prebop stylists been given absolute freedom to record what they wished. This unique world view is most transparent on "Backwards Glance", which honors Gene Krupa and Benny Goodman's duet on "Sing Sing Sing". Mouse's bass drum accents may emulate Krupa's but his skillful cymbal work is undoubtedly post-swing while Robinson's repeated tongue flurries come from John Coltrane not Bud Freeman. "Free Bop" is actually more free swing, especially when Robinson caresses the theme, although the drummer's pinpointed rolls put a harder edge on the performance. With a couple of exceptions that's how most of the CD evolves. Mouse's comfort in outputting nearly every sort of beat reaches an apogee on tracks such as "Orcan", as he duplicates tabla in tandem with Robinson's breathy reed line, and "Dual Duel", one of the few instances where his rhythm is as firmly in the bop mode as Robinson's staccato reed bites reference The New Thing. Unconventional experimentation takes over twice: the title track and "Shapeshifter". On the former, the two demonstrate how understated percussion pacing can crystallize tenor saxophone yelps and warbles into agreeable chromatic swing while on the latter Robinson shifts back and forth from cornet to C-melody saxophone in a mellow line as old-timey modern as it is contemporarily antique.

Tone Ventures is far different. Recorded at Robinson's own ScienSonic Laboratories studio with Roscoe Mitchell, who has likewise mastered a music

store-like collection of instruments, and replete with the warning: "Caution: Contains tonal initiatives for the venturesome listener", the program is presented as being the sonic equivalent of observing nuclear scientists working with the most advanced technology. Several of the tracks exist in Beta form: an idea is briefly exposed, then quickly abandoned without making a statement. More notable are those tracks where the interface adds unique timbres to the reed duet: the meeting of bass flute and bass recorder on "Tone Venture #6", for example, doesn't wallow in subterranean weightiness but instead advances the theme with such elephantine grace that the final sonic image is relaxed and pastoral. "Tone Venture #10A" also avoids cavernous heaviness; Robinson's sluggish contrabass sarrusophone snorts may be hefty enough to shake a skyscraper, but the looping echoes from Mitchell's wind machine and sounds from little instruments add airy counterpoint. Balancing alto, tenor and mezzo-soprano sax plus jazzophone between them, Mitchell and Robinson emphasize the brassiness of their horns on "Tone Venture #12B" and the resulting line is moderato and almost playful. Comparable exultant textures characterize "Tone Venture #14" as soprano and tenor saxophone plus baritone rothophone tremolos blend into an interface that suggests a bagpipe dueting with a songbird. Even "Tone Venture #11B"'s minnow versus whale face-off from soprano and contrabass saxes reveals more than contrasts. Propelling an underlying rhythm, the duo pushes both horns to their highest and lowest limits.

For more information, visit cdbaby.com/cd/jackmousescottrobinson and sciensonic.net. Robinson is at Brooklyn Conservatory of Music Feb. 7th with Rob Garcia and Jazz Standard Feb. 26th-Mar. 1st with Rufus Reid. See Calendar.



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**AMINA CLAUDINE MYERS TRIO
THURMAN BARKER'S STRIKE FORCE PLUS**

Amina Claudine Myers with Jerome Harris (bass guitar) and Reggie Nicholson (drums). Percussionist Thurman Barker with Malik Washington (timpani) Bryan Carrott (vibes), Eli Fountain (marimba), Ray Mantilla (percussion), plus Lonnie Gasperini (hammond organ).

INTERPRETATIONS

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