

CD REVIEW: Review from Russia by Leonid Auskern_____

This CD will open the list of jazz releases of the New Year: *Three Story Sandbox* will go on sale January 1st, 2016. Undoubtedly, it will be categorized as avant-garde and free improvisation music and, I am sure, it will not get lost in this category - that's how unique, colorful, and unusual is the type of free jazz that is presented by Jack Mouse, Scott Robinson, and Janice Borla.

Three Story Sandbox is, above all things, a festival of sounds. While listening to the album one cannot help but marvel at their diversity. A wide arsenal of instruments was used by the musicians in the process of creating their festival. **Jack Mouse**, the percussionist, is using drums and gongs from nearly every place in the world, including those of Chinese, Nepali, and Japanese origin. His long-time friend and colleague **Scott Robinson** is, first and foremost, a master horn player (two types of saxophone, cornet, flutes, clarinet), but apart from that he also plays different percussion instruments, acoustic guitar, and an instrument as exotic as theremin. Meanwhile, the only instrument that Jack's wife **Janice Borla** is using are her own vocal chords, but this singer is so skilled that it seems as though there were more like ten vocalists featured on the record.

All three artists on this record are experienced musicians who have each produced a number of recordings and collaborated with a lot of people. These collaborations, obviously, include their working with one another, even though both Mouse and his wife have their own projects. Just this past year, Mouse and Robinson's album *Snakeheads & Ladybugs* was released. This new one, *Three Story Sandbox*, featuring Borla, as mentioned before, will go out in the beginning of the upcoming year. It was recorded at Tall Grass studio in Naperville, Illinois, where Jack and Janice live and work, and is released on the Tall Grass Records label owned by the spouses themselves.

There are sixteen tracks on the album, of which the first seven are combined into a suite called "Sandbox Suite" - the most abstract or "free" part of the CD. The other nine compositions demonstrate that the musicians are very familiar with more traditional forms of music, such as march, like in 'March To Castile,' or more straight-ahead scat singing. In the words of Jack Mouse, "Our goal was to create a spontaneous, dialogue-like, organized interaction of sounds based on our own experience in music rooted in rich traditions of the jazz genre." It seems to me that this goal was reached. The album is very interesting to listen to, and Janice Borla's voice is just as hard to get confused with anything else, as it is to forget if once you have you heard it. For example, on *Three Story Sandbox*.

~ Translation by Elina Khaneeva