



EVAN PARKER WES NEAL JOE SORBARA

Evan Parker Wes Neal Joe Sorbara

AT SOMEWHERE THERE

Produced by Jean Martin

Recorded live at Somewhere There, Toronto, Canada
by Jean Martin, February 15, 2009
Mixed and mastered by Jean Martin at The Farm, Toronto
Art and photos (Charlton Park, Malmesbury, Wiltshire, UK) by J. Martin
All music © 2011 by Sorbara, Neal (SOCAN) and Parker (PRS/MCPS)

Evan Parker - tenor saxophone
Wes Neal - bass
Joe Sorbara - drums & percussion

At Somewhere There (39:56)



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The recording of freely improvised music performances offers an especially thorny example of the paradox that attends the recording of all musics, most notably jazz, that claim spontaneity and immediacy as among their fundamental defining characteristics. The radical spontaneity of free improvisation – one-off musical performances with no predetermined form or structure – might appear to represent the *ne plus ultra* of the discourse of immediacy that has served to characterize jazz since its earliest days. From this perspective, of course, the very concept of recording would appear to be antithetical. But, contrary to Eric Dolphy's famous contention that music is "gone, in the air", the fact remains that the history of jazz and improvised music is largely the history of sound recordings. And for this – all paradoxes aside – we should be grateful. As friendly experiencers (to borrow Anthony Braxton's felicitous phrase), we are indeed lucky that the development of jazz coincided with the development of recording technology, allowing us to engage with and revisit the rich music-making of the last 100 years.

The trio performance on this recording, featuring Joe Sorbara on drums and percussion, Wes Neal on bass, and Evan Parker on tenor saxophone, formed part of the Parker Interface series, coordinated by AIMToronto and held at Somewhere There in February 2009. This session not only offers an excellent example of the success of the Interface concept, which involves invited guest musicians playing in the company of Toronto-based improvisers, but also confirms – notwithstanding the paradox inherent in the process of preserving spontaneity – the value of recording such music. Throughout the performance, Sorbara and Neal engaged with Parker as musical equals, spurring him on to some of his most inspired and unrestrained tenor playing of the series. The 40-minute set is full of rolling highlights – a particular personal favourite comes at the three-quarters mark, with Parker on the edge of breaking into a fractured jig against Neal's bowed bass and Sorbara's gong-like chiming, from what is actually a metal record deck platter (think vinyl – at this point, the history of sound recording implicates itself directly in the music). But it's the sustained intensity of the performance that is most striking, indicating a depth of musical understanding that simply belies the fact that this was the first time these musicians had played together. Contrary to Derek Bailey's contentious claim for improvised music as a "non-idiomatic" form of musical practice, it is precisely the form's idiomatic elements that engender and enable the sophisticated musical communication heard on this recording. And, paradoxical or otherwise, this is genuinely spontaneous music that deserves repeated listening.

Alan Stanbridge - February 2011

