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November 2010

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REVIEW BY PHILLIP GREENLIEF

Roscoe Mitchell and Henry Grimes at CNMAT

Like many listeners, I discovered Roscoe Mitchell through his recordings with the Art Ensemble of Chicago. But it didn't take long to find his other recordings as a leader. Genius has a tendency to overwhelm or confuse audiences on first contact. It took decades of exploring the saxophone on my own before I could fully appreciate the vision that Mitchell and Braxton posited in their early recordings. When you go back to listen to records like *The Roscoe Mitchell Sound Ensemble*, or Anthony Braxton's *For Alto* (both released on the Delmark Records label and both released in the late 1960's) you hear can hear the methods of the modern post-Coltrane approach unfolding and taking flight. There is the sorting of sound possibilities: short, percussive sounds, sounds that sustain over longer periods and how those sounds change in microscopic ways; there is the negotiation with traditional harmony and the exploration of the overtone series. There is the unraveling of multiphonics – with regard to both multiple notes and multiple textures – all of which represent aspects of the invisible handbook that contemporary saxophonists are dealing with today.

You could hear all of those ideas and sound forms on display on Friday night at CNMAT (Center for New Music and Technology). But great music achieves more than jaw-dropping techniques on display, and it should be stated clearly that Grimes and Mitchell have fully integrated these techniques into their musical language.

The duo began with Mitchell stating alternating thematic fragments on soprano and bass saxophone while Grimes accompanied him with modal phrases that twisted and coursed the melodies from the saxophone. Eventually Mitchell settled on the bass sax and began to expand the opening motifs. Sometime around the 20-minute mark during the first set these patient improvisers were in full flight – peaking with energy and thematic development.

Throughout the rest of the evening and regardless of technical approach or how abstract the musical language, you could hear Roscoe the storyteller. While it is clear that words can never really express the language of music, the content of the duo's musical language always felt deeply steeped in an historical narrative, and the sounds emerged with an urgency that drew the audience closer.

In perfect compliment, Grimes offered an avalanche of musical ideas, always in tandem with Mitchell's explorations and always balanced perfectly with dynamics and timbre. If you could guess at the content of the narrative, it gave the impression that Mitchell and his horn are one – the history of the saxophone and the personal history of the man are deeply wedded, and it is in this fashion that the musicians transcend technique and command the term master musician.

At the same time, it was Mitchell that said in a recent interview (*Signal to Noise*) that music is too great for us to master it – it is music that masters us. The duo on Friday night exhibited their respect for music (and the audience returned that respect) – they never chose to play something flashy in order to wow the audience – the performance was in service of music itself, not the player's egos or their legendary reputations.

The variation of orchestration gave the duo plenty of sonic space to explore. Grimes played violin and bass and Mitchell played soprano, soprano, alto and bass saxophone. The shuffling of those combinations allowed the musicians to establish form effortlessly throughout the two sets, which clocked in at a little over two hours. And by the end it seemed that they had never repeated themselves. You could not begin to chart all the styles that emerged throughout the evening-there was one gorgeous moment in the second set where the blues emerged –albeit a blues with

Mitchell's serpentine phrases.

The standing-room only audience at CNMAT was offered a rare treat to hear two of the finest improvising musicians in the world stretching out in an intimate setting and offering us the AACM's mission to present Great Black Music – ancient to the future. Big thanks to David Wessell for consistently bringing great musicians of this caliber (and emerging local artists) to his west coast haven for new music over the past few decades. ●

About this thing

The Transbay Creative Music Calendar is a volunteer-produced free monthly journal for non-commercial creative new music in the San Francisco Bay Area. In addition to our comprehensive listing of upcoming events, we publish articles and reviews about local music and the people who create it. We talk about a wide range of modern music, including: experimental, improvised, noise, electronic, free-jazz, outrock, 21st century compositions, and sonic art. Each month, 1,000 copies of the Transbay are mailed to individuals and hand-delivered to over 45 performance venues and public locations throughout the Bay Area. Contact us for a free subscription.

Volunteers needed right away!

The Transbay needs editorial and production staff, perhaps combined in the same person. If you have writing and digital print skills, please contact us at mail@transbaycalendar.org.

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the san francisco bay area monthly publication for
experimental/improvised/noise/electronic/freejazz/outrock/21st century transgenred music and sonic art

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Monday November 1

Makeout Room • 8pm free
JAYN PETTINGILL'S VERB: Jayn Pettingill, saxophone + compositions / Rob Ewing, trombone / Lisa Mezzacappa, bass / Vijay Anderson, drums :: MATT SMALL'S CRUSHING SPIRAL ENSEMBLE: Matt Small, bass + compositions / Chris Grady, trumpet / Steve Adams + Sheldon Brown, saxes / Micah McClain, drums :: CORY WRIGHT'S GREEN MITCHELL: Cory Wright, saxophone + clarinets, compositions / John Schott, guitar / Lisa Mezzacappa, bass / Sam Ospovat, drums

Kingman's Ivy Room • 9pm free
Living Jazz Series: RoTrMa Trio - Rent Romus, Marshall Trammell & Bob Marsh and special guests Jim Ryan, Pete Martin, poet Robert Anbian and more!

Wednesday November 3

Kingman's Ivy Room • 9pm donation
EXPERIMENTAL MUSIC NIGHT: "From the rigorous to the weird" Featuring Daniel Popsicle, Jacob Zimmerman's Lawson Ensemble, and Sam Ospovat/ Lorin Benedict.

Thursday November 4

Luggage Store New Music Series • 8pm \$6-10
8pm Emergency String (X)tet featuring butoh Kinji Hayashi
9pm Michael Carreira performing "CMBLS" a performance piece of thick waves of shimmering noise

Friday November 5

Berkeley Art Museum • 7:30pm \$7
The UC Berkeley Chamber Chorus, directed by Marika Kuzma, and the Abel-Steinberg-Winant Trio perform Morton Feldman's affecting, meditative masterpiece Rothko Chapel, in the resonant architecture of the Berkeley Art Museum. The reflective, elegiac mood is continued and enhanced by performances of Robert Ashley's choral work She Was a Visitor, Lou Harrison's gamelan composition Threnody for Carlos Chávez, and Roscoe Mitchell's monument for the victims of Hurricane Katrina, Bells for New Orleans.

Mt. Tamalpais United Methodist Church • 8pm \$10-30
Volti joins Acalanes HS, Head-Royce High School, San Francisco School of the Arts, and Piedmont East Bay Children's Choirs to perform "Five Centuries of Spring," by beloved San Francisco composer Kirke Mechem. Also on the program: works by Louis Andriessen, Tom Flaherty and David Lipten.

Meridian Gallery • 8pm \$10
Tonight T.D. Skatchit & Company celebrate their new recording called, Skatch Migration with a show featuring T.D. Skatchit (Tom Nunn & David Michalak)

playing the Skatchbox in trios with guests who appeared on the CD; Bruce Ackley - Soprano Sax, Bob Marsh - voice, Doug Carroll - Cello and Aurora - voice.

Old First Church • 8pm \$14-17
MELODY OF CHINA AND ASIAN IMPROV ARTS COLLABORATE TO PRESENT The World Premiere of "Shanghai Stories" a musical evening celebrating an intersection of cultures featuring JAZZ MUSIC WITH CHINESE INSTRUMENTS by Francis Wong with Melody of China

Saturday November 6

First Presbyterian Church of Oakland • 8pm \$10-30
Volti joins Acalanes HS, Head-Royce High School, San Francisco School of the Arts, and Piedmont East Bay Children's Choirs to perform "Five Centuries of Spring," by beloved San Francisco composer Kirke Mechem. Also on the program: works by Louis Andriessen, Tom Flaherty and David Lipten.

Li Po Cocktail Lounge • 9pm \$5
A night of experimental music and film with Zachary James Watkins, Kenneth Atchley and film maker John Reily with soundtracks by Lars Hidde and Charles Kremenak.

Sunday November 7

Walt Disney Family Museum • 4pm \$15-20
Volti joins Acalanes HS, Head-Royce High School, San Francisco School of the Arts, and Piedmont East Bay Children's Choirs to perform "Five Centuries of Spring," by beloved San Francisco composer Kirke Mechem. Also on the program: works by Louis Andriessen, Tom Flaherty and David Lipten.

Monday November 8

Kingman's Ivy Room • 9pm free
Kingman's Ivy Room and Evander Music Presents the Living Jazz Series, featuring The Lost Trio: Phillip Greenlief - tenor saxophone; Dan Seamans - bass; Tom Hassett - drums - The Lost Trio celebrates 16 years of playing together with a bi-monthly residency at The Ivy Room. Come out to hear one of the bay area's finest jazz ensembles.

Wednesday November 10

Saul's • 7pm free
Saul's Presents: Phillip Greenlief and Cory Wright play Bartok - Phillip Greenlief and Cory Wright use Bela Bartok's 44 duos for violins as a springboard for their imaginative arrangements for two clarinets. The duo will play two sets, starting at 7 pm.

Meridian Gallery • 7:30pm \$10 general; \$5 students/seniors
Meridian Music presents a rare solo appearance by Jack Wright of Easton Pennsylvania, performing on alto and soprano saxophones.

Thursday November 11

Luggage Store New Music Series • 8pm
Outsound Presents SoundSpeak: a series presenting pairings of sound and voice artists. CJ Borosque, Arachnid Arcade, Hugh Behm-Steinberg, Matt Davignon, Lorin Benedict, Sam Ospovat

Friday November 12

Berkeley Art Museum • 7:30pm \$7
Music by ARP (Alexis Georgopoulos), films by Paul Clipson, and a video loop by Sara Mergenheimer that evoke autumn as well as the zeitgeist of Japan during the economic boom of the late Edo period.

NOTA THE MILK BAR at The Biscuit Factory • 8:30pm \$5-10
MilkBar #3 for 2010 features new music, performance and film work. Artists TBA. <http://www.milkbar.org>.

Sunday November 14

Artists' Television Access • 4pm \$6
"Loud Film...Silent Music: Hallucinarium and other diversions" ...at the ATA w/live scores by Cartoon Justice to films and video sculptures by Sietske Tjalingii, Jorge Davies, Meg Schoerke, Mika Pontecorvo, and Neal Elzenga. Electro-acoustic Shamanic Noise Jazz

Yerba Buena Center for the Arts • 7pm \$22-50
28th San Francisco Jazz Festival Presents Vijay Iyer Trio. For this SFJAZZ date, Iyer performs with his Historicity trio, featuring bassist Stephan Crump and drummer Marcus Gilmore

SIMM Series • 7:30pm \$10/8
7:30 pm Randy Lee Sutherland Marshall Trammell and friends
8:30 pm Forward Energy Returns! w/Eddie Gale, Jim Ryan, Scott R. Looney, Tim Orr, Doug Stuart

Monday November 15

Mills College Ensemble Room • 7:30pm free
Composer Matthew Goodheart presents a lecture/demonstration concerning "Transducer Activated Cymbals and Gongs," his new sound installation. Small transducers are attached to the rear surfaces of cymbals and gongs which are then controlled via a computer, resulting in a revelation of resonant dimensions previously hidden in these traditional instruments.

Kingman's Ivy Room • 9pm free
Kingman's Ivy Room and Evander Music Presents: The Living Jazz Series, featuring Ross Hammond Trio: Phillip Greenlief - alto saxophone; Ross Hammond - guitar; John Hanes - drums - Wild and wooly improvised music from this off-kilter power trio!

the persistent caveat
Schedules are subject to change, and the reasons can be totally appalling, flying in the face of human reason.
Please confirm details provided in this publication by visiting transbaycalendar.org.

Tuesday November 16

Tuesdays at Tom's Place • 7:30pm donation
Phillip Greenlief (sax); Jack Wright (sax) with John Shiurba (gtr) and Gino Robair (perc,elec)

Amnesia • 9pm \$6
Legendary SF experimental grind band Burmese, LA Synth-punk duo Tearist, crushing double Oakland noise duo Preyers (R. Jencks + secret guest), and local electroacoustic noise and electronic music wizard Ata Ebtekar.

Thursday November 18

Luggage Store New Music Series • 8pm \$6-10
Outsound Presents Full Moon Concerts - Mourning Moon: A tribute to the ancestors and the beloved dead.
8 PM: FIGHTS MONSTERS (Ryan Gregory Tallman) with Jason Hoopes
9 PM: Lawson

Saturday November 20

Temescal Arts Center • 8pm \$5-15
This Here Show #16 "Improper Opera" -- An entirely improvised opera-like experience. Five singer/characters and a narrator move through shifting visual tableaux and performer combinations, with an "orchestra" and maybe a "choir." With Herb Heinz, Mark Briggs, Aurora Josephson, Bob Marsh, Amy X Neuburg, Melissa Rae, Joel Davel, Shawn King, Doug Carroll, Hillary Overberg -- Shadowgrams by Rae Douglass, lights by Andrew Bennett.

Monday November 22

Kingman's Ivy Room • 9pm free
Kingman's Ivy Room and Evander Music Presents the Living Jazz Series, featuring The Lost Trio: Phillip Greenlief - tenor saxophone; Dan Seamans - bass; Tom Hassett - drums - The Lost Trio celebrates 16 years of playing together with a bi-monthly residency at The Ivy Room. Come out to hear one of the bay area's finest jazz ensembles.

Monday November 29

Yoshi's Oakland • 8pm \$14
Yoshi's Presents Sarah Wilson's Trapeze Project, featuring: Sarah Wilson trumpet/vocals; BEN GOLDBERG clarinet; MYRA MELFORD piano; JEROME HARRIS bass; SCOTT AMENDOLA drums

Kingman's Ivy Room • 9pm free
Kingman's Ivy Room and Evander Music Presents: The Living Jazz Series, featuring Phillip Greenlief Quartet: Phillip Greenlief - tenor saxophone; Karl Evangelista - guitar; Dan Seamans - bass; John Hanes - drums - The quartet will play compositions by Thelonious Monk and original compositions by the members of the group.

venue information

21 Grand
416 25th Street, Oakland [near Broadway]
Amnesia
853 Valencia Street, San Francisco
Artists' Television Acces
992 Valencia Street, San Francisco [at 21st]
Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive
2626 Bancroft Way, Berkeley
Community Music Center
544 Capp Street, San Francisco
First Presbyterian Church of Oakland
2619 Broadway Oakland

Ivy Room
860 San Pablo Avenue, Albany
Li Po Cocktail Lounge
916 Grant Avenue, San Francisco

Luggage Store Gallery
1007 Market Street, San Francisco [at 6th]

Makeout Room
22nd Street, San Francisco [at Mission]

Meridian Gallery
535 Powell Street, San Francisco

Mills College Ensemble Room
5000 MacArthur Blvd. Oakland

Musicians Union Hall
116 9th Street, San Francisco [at Mission]
NOTA THE MILK BAR at The Biscuit Factory
81st and San Leandro, Oakland
Old First Church
1751 Sacramento Street, San Francisco
Saul's
1475 Shattuck Avenue, North Berkeley CA
San Francisco Conservatory of Music
50 Oak Street, San Francisco
Temescal Arts Center
511 48th Street, Oakland

Tom's Place
3111 Deakin Street, Berkeley
Tamalpais United Methodist Church
410 Sycamore Avenue, Mill Valley
Unitarian Universalist Church of Berkeley
1 Lawson Road, Kensington

Walt Disney Family Museum
104 Montgomery Street, San Francisco

Yerba Buena Center for the Arts
701 Mission Street, San Francisco [at 3rd]

Yoshi's Oakland
510 Embarcadero, West Oakland



Outsound Presents the Full Moon Concert Series
NOVEMBER 18, 2010 – Mourning Moon
A tribute to the ancestors and the beloved dead

8 PM: FIGHTS MONSTERS
(Ryan Gregory Tallman) with Jason Hoopes
9 PM: Lawson

at the Luggage Store Gallery
1007 Market Street @ 6th Street
San Francisco, CA
Admission: \$6.00 - \$10.00 sliding scale