

The Boomerang

New reissues and archive releases

Fred Anderson Quartet

The Milwaukee Tapes Vol 2

Corbett Vs Dempsey CD/DL

Tenor saxophonist Fred Anderson moved from Louisiana to the Chicago area in 1940 and died there in 2010. He was an early member of the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians, and while he didn't stay in the organisation, he did remain in town when many of the AACM's founders moved to New York. Anderson became a mentor to the generations of younger musicians who played at his establishments, especially The Velvet Lounge. Anderson is also revered for his work ethic; it was nothing to see him restock the Velvet bar in between the sets of his own gig, then go ahead and stretch that third set way out because he wasn't done playing.

Anderson's devotion to the work also manifested in long periods of solitary practice and study, during which he composed a book of music that he relied upon for the rest of his life. Structures that fostered familiarity were his portals into the ineffable states he'd pursue during long, energetic solos. Some of the tunes on *The Milwaukee Tapes Vol 2*, which was recorded in early 1980, were still in circulation a quarter of a century later, and some of the same musicians continued to play with him.

This disc is a chance to hear drummer Hamid Drake (then known as Hank) in his impetuous youth, when he was still pulling together his command of polyrhythms. Drake's debt to Ed Blackwell's mixture of parade beats and African patterns is especially apparent on "Another Place", where he dances circles around bassist Larry Hayrod's stalwart groove. Trumpeter Billy Brimfield had been Anderson's foil of choice since the late 1950s, and they had developed a capacity to spin out simultaneous explorations of separate paths that would somehow sync up, combining Ornette-level brashness with Rollins-esque stamina.

Bill Meyer

Electric Sun

Earthquake

Alpha Experiem CD/DL/LP

Uli Jon Roth was lead guitarist and occasional vocalist with German hard rock band Scorpions between 1974–77, playing on four studio albums during their most interesting phase, when they were still a post-psychedelic outfit incorporating elements of prog and neoclassical pomp. Roth quit the Scorpis just before they found major commercial success as hair metal balladeers, forming the power trio Electric Sun with bassist Ule Ritgen and drummer Clive Edwards.

The trio's 1979 debut *Earthquake* was dedicated to the spirit of Jimi Hendrix, an influence that Roth never tried very hard to

disguise. Opening track "Electric Sun" (which bears a remarkable resemblance to Scorpions' "Polar Nights" from 1976), is a blast of uptempo, Band Of Gypsys-style psychedelic R&B with Roth contributing entirely forgettable vocals and gloriously stratospheric shredding that sits comfortably in Hendrix's wake, pointing the way to both the intuitive blues wail of Jeff Healey and the clinical precision of Yngwie Malmsteen. Several other tracks seem to have been explicitly built around the skeletons of Hendrix tunes. "Lilac" riffs on "Third Stone From The Sun" and "Sundown" is a close cousin to Jimi's version of "All Along The Watchtower".

When Roth lets his own voice come through, there's a lot more going on. "Still So Many Lives Away" reveals a knack for catchy pop rock reminiscent of Blue Öyster Cult, while the title track is a ten minute opus of monumental sludge, neoclassical stiffness and relentless psychedelic jammage that almost implodes under the weight of its own seriousness. You can virtually see the extreme grimacing its playing must have engendered.

A couple of bonus cuts from 1978 capture the trio in full jam band mode negotiating some sleazy funk rock but are so brief they do little more than tantalise. A whole album of Electric Sun improvising would, indeed, be worth waxing one's moustache for.

Daniel Spicer

Emeralds

Does It Look Like I'm Here?

Ghostly International 2xCD/DL/2xLP/MC

Mark McGuire

A Pocket Full Of Rain

Husky Pants DL/2xLP

Ohio neo-kosmische group Emeralds marked 2023 with their first live shows in around a decade, though at the time of writing there's still no word of new music from the trio of John Elliott, Steve Hauschildt and Mark McGuire. Until further notice then, *Does It Look Like I'm Here?* – released by Editions Mego in 2010 following a healthy procession of short-run tapes and CD-Rs – will remain their flagship release. If Ghostly's reissue serves the purpose of putting an already well-regarded album back into print, then one supposes the excavation of *A Pocket Full Of Rain*, a 2009 double cassette by Emeralds guitarist McGuire, is about getting a lost underground jewel its vinyl due. Although you'd have to confirm that with gregarious folk rocker Ryley Walker, whose label has pressed it up.

McGuire opens *Pocket* with its most ambitious turn, the 13 minute "Extended Forecast". Its base elements are pillowy, friendly space rock guitar, but these are overlaid by more jittery, staccato figures, while its latter stages shift focus entirely to something more like dark ambient. The album's other especially lengthy track "Sick Chemistry" is a seriously heady fuzz workout – hints of wah pedal, yes, but less instrumental

opulence than the stuff that earned McGuire multiple Manuel Götttsching comparisons (he's repeatedly since claimed to have only a dabbler's affinity with the German guitarist).

"Sun Shining Through The Open Barn Door", a pensive folky instrumental and *Pocket's* closing track, presages a sound Emeralds occasionally investigate on *Does It Look Like I'm Here?* and "Escape Wheel" could almost be Six Organs Of Admittance. The full, two hour plus package of this reissue has an unreleased version of album cut "Genetic" that runs to 28 minutes and changes McGuire's guitar sound up almost entirely.

If anything, though, the original album was a showroom for Elliott and Hauschildt's synth inventiveness. The keyboard lines on LP opener "Candy Shoppe" – clean and not wholly unlike Hans-Joachim Roedelius – heralded a shift in Emeralds' style, while the tones on "Double Helix" and the title track bump austere like the best Detroit electro. It sounded colossal through a big PA at the time and presumably still does.

Noel Gardner

Fantastic Voyage: New Sounds For The European Canon 1977-1981

Various

Ace CD/DL/LP

Taking David Bowie's "Station To Station" as its starting point, *Fantastic Voyage* is the second in a series of compilations from Saint Etienne founder Bob Stanley and Jason Wood of the BFI. Where 2020's *Café Exil* contextualised Bowie's early years in Berlin with tracks from the likes of Brian Eno and Faust, *Fantastic Voyage* looks at Bowie's peers and subsequent influence in the late 1970s.

Across 17 tracks, Stanley and Wood provide a comprehensive overview of the artists who found inspiration and kinship in Bowie's embrace of distinctly European sounds. Bowie's peers are shown taking an art rock swerve, from Peter Gabriel's Steve Reich-inspired "No Self Control" to The Walker Brothers' sumptuous, strange "Nite Flights" – a key moment in Scott Walker's transformation from crooner to arthouse hero. Daryl Hall's Eno-esque soundscape "The Farther Away I Am" is a totem from a parallel world where even the most commercial of songwriters could link up with Robert Fripp on an AOR album about esoteric magic (the excellent *Sacred Songs*).

These sit alongside lesser known tracks by Isabelle Mayereau (minimalist ballad "On A Trouvé"), Chas Jankel (mutant disco track "3,000,000 Synths") and Holger Czukay – whose "Ode To Perfume" is an example of a key Bowie influence being influenced in turn. A dark, gothic influence on disco is also hinted at with the early Patrick Cowley track "Nightcrawler" and Basil Kirchin's "Silicon Chip", which sounds like Kraftwerk thawing in a New York club.

With songs by the likes of Ryuichi