

Mp3 Brett Larner, Joelle Leandre & Kazuhisa Uchihashi - No Day Rising



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Free Improvisation. 13 MP3 Songs JAZZ: Free Jazz Details: Brett Larner, koto, bass koto, prepared bass koto Joelle Leandre, contrabass Kazuhisa Uchihashi, electric guitar, daxophone Recorded on October 28, 2002, by Tadashi Usami at CCM studio, Oakland CA Mastered on November 29, 2002, by Myles Boisen at Headless Buddha Mastering Lab, Oakland, Ca. What the Critics are Saying: No Day Rising is a document harnessed from one of those improbable circumstances whereby far-flung improvisors come together. Koto and bass koto specialist Brett Larner - associated both with his duet partner Anthony Braxton, and with the Tokyo onkyo scene in which he has performed frequently - was a student at Mills College when this date was recorded in 2002. Kazuhisa Uchihashi - a specialist on the guitar and daxophone, a modified string/wood instrument familiar to fans of Hans Reichel - was in Oakland on Larner's invitation for some gigs. Turns out that French contrabassist and vocalist Joelle Leandre was a visiting professor at Mills that fall. Leandre was in between engagements and had the briefest of windows during which to record, so Larner booked an overnight studio session, the fruits of which make up this recording. Comprised of 13 short tracks - which Larner reckons have the focused intensity of rock music, which could be why the disc's title recalls a certain Husker Du record - each of which is titled after the hour at which it was recorded, these wondrously strange performances have a nighttime spectral quality to them, as if characterized by apparitions and visions that one is uncertain one has actually seen. What was that shadow? Whence that noise? Is someone watching me? The feel ranges from a chorus of bells to buckling wood and metal; from the whispers of sine waves and rubbed glass to spiky sharp electric proddings. Vocal sounds are also quite prominent, though I'm fairly certain most of these are from the daxophone and not Leandre's contributions. The dynamic range is fairly wide as well. The idiomatic

properties of the instruments are almost never audible, which is not to say that the music lacks elements of structure and organization (since there are tones, counterpoint, and even some near-motives). But this is structure and organization without a net. One of the keys to the music's success is surely Uchihashi's mysterious and highly pliable daxophone, with its uniquely wide range of sounds, from the moaning of sirens to harsh percussive plunks. It tends to establish many of the musical connections here, or to swing wildly into new and unexpected directions. Brief but enigmatic, this disc is - in terms of both instrumentation and level of success - distinct from many run of the mill improv recordings out there.

Jason Bivens, *Dusted In* his liner notes to this trio's first meeting, koto player Brett Larner calls the 13 tracks on the disc "almost pop songs." While filing under pop would be hasty as best, it's an interesting way to look at his cd of strings rung, pounded and plucked. Like a good pop record, the individual songs explore a variety of ideas without exhausting or belaboring them. But without vocals, melody lines or hooks, the parallel pretty much ends there. Instead they set up motifs and rotate roles (percussive playing, scratching, distracting). Larner as often alters as plays his instrument (among other things, he's used gyroscopes to make the strings drone), but here the instrument's natural voice sings (albeit sometimes muted or otherwise prepared). Electric guitarist Kazuhisa Uchihashi tends toward effect, doing more background wash than upfront playing. The surprise here is the enormously talented Joelle Leandre, whose huge tone and towering vocals are kept to a minimum. While this is initially a disappointment, Leandre is more than well documented and it's good to hear her in a different setting.

The koto really leads the show, forcing the bass and guitar to slow down. Kurt Gottschalk, *The Squid's Ear No Day Rising* is a total workout in strings meeting wood. The convergence of Larner's prepared koto and Uchihashi's versatile daxophone with Leandre's nimble bridgework on contrabass occupies a similar sonic range, which makes for a cohesive result. Toward the end,...Leandre's arco passages are more dominant, causing the other two players to play more melodically. Overall, a very well-balanced, almost tuneful meeting captured in a strong, smooth recording.

David Dacks, *Exclaim* Brett Larner Brett Larner is Canada's premiere performer of new music for the traditional Japanese instrument koto. A Phi Beta Kappa graduate of Wesleyan University, Larner has studied with masters Anthony Braxton and Kazue Sawai, and his playing reflects the different lessons learned from these studies. He is active as both improviser and composer and constantly works to develop new techniques for the koto, most notable in his piece for koto and thirteen gyroscopes, *Telemetry Transmission*. Larner has performed both solo and

in ensembles throughout Canada, Japan and the United States with musicians including Samm Bennett, Anthony Braxton, Loren Mazzacane Connors, Kevin Drumm, Gianni Gebbia, Kazauo Imai, Fred Lonberg-Holm, John Fahey, Ko Ishikawa, Sachiko M, Phil Minton, Toshimaru Nakamura, John Russell, Richard Teitelbaum, Jim ORourke, Tetsu Saitoh, Kazue Sawai, the late Tadao Sawai, Taku Sugimoto and Sabu Toyozumi. He is a member of the contemporary koto ensemble Soemon, Otomo Yoshihide's Portable Orchestra, and works in a duo with Taku Sugimoto. He is the founder and director of both the Deluxe Improvisation Series and Deluxe Improvisation Festival in Tokyo.

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