

JEROME HARRIS
Hidden in Plain View

New World Records 80472

HIDDEN IN PLAIN VIEW---THE LEGACY OF ERIC DOLPHY

"I want to say more on my horn than I ever could in ordinary speech."

Eric Dolphy¹

Look up Eric Dolphy in any contemporary encyclopedic jazz history and you are likely to find an entry something like this:

Eric Allen Dolphy was born in Los Angeles on June 20, 1928 and died in Berlin thirty-six years and nine days later on June 29, 1964. A formidable soloist on alto saxophone, flute, and bass clarinet, he began playing clarinet at age six and was playing professionally in dance bands by junior high school. He studied music at Los Angeles City College and, while in the service, at the U.S. Naval School of Music. Upon leaving the military, he returned to L.A. and became a fixture in the West Coast jazz scene, ultimately joining Chico Hamilton's quintet in 1958. 1959 found him in New York, a member of the Charles Mingus band, a freelance player, and the leader of recording dates under his own name. Despite his burgeoning fame, he found little employment in the United States--although he did co-lead a quintet with Booker Little--and left for Europe in the fall of 1961, where he played as a bandleader and as a member of John Coltrane's band. He also played in John Lewis' Orchestra U.S.A. and in Gunther Schuller's Third Stream melding of art-music and jazz sensibilities. Dolphy spent most of the last year of his life working as a freelance musician, primarily for Mingus, Lewis, and Coltrane. He was touring Europe, playing with local musicians, when he died of a heart attack, a complication of his untreated diabetes.

As short as his life and as dry as a cracker, this résumé is becoming the perceived reality of Eric Dolphy's legacy. For a player with such a unique and highly personal voice, this is criminal. Looking further for some indication of Dolphy's current stature, one confronts statements such as, "Perhaps his greatest contribution to jazz was his exploration of the bass clarinet as a medium for jazz improvisation."² That a peer of Charles Mingus, Ornette Coleman, John Coltrane and--despite his tragically short career--a participant in "some of the most significant recordings of the late '50s and early '60s"³ should have dropped off the map so thoroughly that his most notable accomplishment is seen as the employment of an obscure (for jazz) instrument beggars belief. But this gentle man frightened the critical jazz establishment during his lifetime; John Tynan, reviewing a John Coltrane/Eric Dolphy performance at Hollywood's Renaissance Club wrote, "Coltrane and Dolphy seem intent on deliberately destroying [swing]... They seem bent on pursuing an anarchistic course in their music that can but be termed anti-jazz."⁴

Dolph's instrumental voice was so intensely personal, so suffused with emotion, and so attuned to the cadences of speech that it resembled nothing so much as a human voice. His soloing style juxtaposed emotions, frequently contrasting ones, over a pattern of shifting phrases in which the fragmented melodic line alternated with ornamental flourishes. This does not imply that he diluted the central idea of his argument, either by the changing emotional tenor or through his use of beautiful decoration, merely that in his vision---as in the prose of Henry James--ideas could be expressed only through the exploration of all of their implications. Yet, with a vocabulary that encompassed all of human experience, what predominates in Dolphy's music is the sense of sheer joy that it conveys: joy in life; joy in music, which his technical facility embellished; and, unmistakably, joy in communicating.

It is distressing to find such a voice silenced by indifference to its creator. Jerome Harris, in describing the genesis of this project, noted, "Recently, I've heard comments by younger players, who are saying that Dolphy couldn't play! Or more, that they didn't feel that he was headed in a valid direction. I've also observed a stance, among the young traditionalists, where they excise from the canon musicians considered avant-garde. I maintain that the avant-garde was a part of the tradition. A player's sources may not be obvious, or orthodox, but that doesn't mean that these players don't have deep roots in the music's past practices. That these players are considered *not worthy of notice* is a trend that deeply disturbs me.

"There are people whose styles contain elements that are easy to emulate. Coltrane is a good example; some things about his playing style lend themselves to practice and so we now have several generations of tenor saxophonists who are directly influenced by Trane. Others are more in the realm of inspiration, rather than emulation. Dolphy was definitely one of those."

Harris set out to reflect Dolphy's voice in a number of ways, starting with his choice of band. Dolphy recorded consistently, in his final year of life, with a lineup that added trumpet, vibraphone, bass, and drums to his woodwinds; change the comping instrument to piano and add a second saxophone, and you have the instrumentation of the Charles Mingus Jazz Workshop, the closest Dolphy came to a stable working environment during that period. This blend of instrumental families offered tonal possibilities that obviously appealed to, and inspired, him.

The band's ability to play off the head is a necessity, for another aspect of Dolphy's voice was the space that he wrote into his tunes. It could be argued that his pieces were intended, in fact, to be frameworks upon which solos were affixed. Dolphy recorded most of them several times without changing the core, no matter how much time had passed between performances or how different the instrumental composition of the band--the solos alone seemed to live and change. This was not because Dolphy was technically incapable of writing harmonically conventional songs, but rather because he valued spontaneity so profoundly. "It helps me play..." he explained to writer Don DeMichael. "It's like you have no idea what you're going to do next. You have an idea, but there's always that spontaneous thing that happens."⁵

The members of the group assembled here have all, Harris confirms, "dealt with Eric's legacy. . . . It's not a matter of *inside/outside* or *bebop* or *free*--I think we're trying to transcend the limitations of *either/or*. It can be *and* and *also*."

Harris' two original compositions are offered as much in response to Dolphy's legacy to jazz as in tribute to him. The chorale "Emanation" was inspired by Dolphy's speaking voice; the record *Last Date* ends with a fragment from an interview conducted by Dutch journalist Michiel de Ruyter, grafted to the end of a performance of "Miss Ann":

When you hear music, after it's over--it's gone, into the air. You can never capture it again.

"Fortunately, with recordings that is no longer true," Harris explains. "I was thinking about the brevity of Dolphy's life and about spirits--about the reverberations of people's work. I was also inspired by the chordal structure of the slow movement of Stravinsky's *Three Pieces for String Quartet*, which has very interesting harmonies, harmonies that have implications for a couple of different tonalities simultaneously." Richard Davis reports that Dolphy was composing a string quartet at the time of his death.

"Hidden In Plain View" grew out of Harris' admiration for the ensemble playing on the album *Out to Lunch*. "I always loved that record because everyone plays so *melodically*, while using a full range of expression dynamically *and* melodically. Some people unfairly categorize Sixties avant-garde music as being all screaming and bashing--whereas *Out to Lunch* is so fully realized. I wanted some composed material of strong melodic and rhythmic character to jump off from. I was really surprised that we wound up with a fairly steady pulse, but that's the thing about improvising: If you're lucky, sometimes you get surprised."

—Wes Phillips

Wes Phillips *is a writer who specializes in music and electronics.*

NOTES

1. Quoted from Robert Levin's liner notes to *Eric Dolphy In Europe, Vol. 1* (Prestige 7304).
2. *The New Grove Dictionary of Jazz*. Barry Kernfeld, ed. St. Martin's Press, New York. 1964. p. 296.
3. Martin Williams, Forward. *Eric Dolphy: A Musical Biography & Discography*. Simosko, Vladimir; Tepperman, Barry. Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington. 1971.
4. John Tynan. *Down Beat*, November 23, 1961.
5. "John Coltrane and Eric Dolphy Answer the Jazz Critics", Don DeMichael. *Down Beat*, April 12, 1962.

JEROME HARRIS

It is unusual for a non-reed player to actively pursue a career on more than one instrument, but Jerome Harris is as active a guitarist as he is a bassist. He has collaborated with an astonishingly diverse cross-section of contemporary artists, including Oliver Lake, Sonny Rollins, George Russell, Julius Hemphill, Bob Moses, and Amina Claudine Myers--as well as most of the musicians in the ensemble featured on this disc.

Harris first encountered an acoustic bass guitar several years ago, when he met a player who had commissioned one from a luthier in Portugal. He was impressed, yet felt he had wait until the

technology of the pickups employed was more fully developed. The Sigma© instrument Harris plays here utilizes both a bridge pickup and a small microphone inside the bass' hollow body. It is unique in its tonality. "I find there is a woodiness and a broadness to the tone--not to mention an upper-bass, lower midrange *punch* to the attack--that lends itself to 'walking.' It has a different sort of *thump* than solid-body bass guitars. This is the first time I've used it for an entire album."

Eric Dolphy Discography

As leader:

- Conversations*. (1963) FM-308(LP)/Celluloid CELD-5014(CD) [also released as *The Eric Dolphy Memorial Album* Vee-Jay VJ 2503].
- Eric Dolphy at the Five Spot*. (1961) Prestige/New Jazz 8260(LP)/OJC 5133(LP).
- Eric Dolphy in Europe*. (1961) Prestige 7304(LP)/OJC 413-2(CD).
- Iron Man*. (1963) Douglas International SD 785(LP)/Metrotone 72659-2(CD).
- Last Date*. (1964) Limelight LM 82013(LP)/Polydor 822226-2(CD).
- Out To Lunch*. (1964) Blue Note 84263(LP)/Blue Note B21Y-46524(CD).
- Outward Bound*. (1960) Prestige 7311(LP)/OJC 022-2(CD).

Representative discography as bandmember:

- Ornette Coleman. *Free Jazz*. (1960) Atlantic 1364(LP)/1364-2(CD).
- John Coltrane. *Live At The Village Vanguard*. (1961) Impulse 10(LP)/MCA Impulse MCAD-39136(CD).
- John Coltrane. *Impressions*. (1961) Impulse 42(LP)/MCA/Impulse MCAD-5887(CD).
- Abbey Lincoln. *Straight Ahead*. (1961) Candid CJM 8015(LP)/CCD-79015(CD).
- Charles Mingus. *Charles Mingus Presents Charles Mingus*. (1960) Candid 9005(LP)/CCD-7905(CD).
- Charles Mingus. *The Great Concert of Charles Mingus*. (1964) American 003-5(LP).
- Charles Mingus. *Town Hall Concert*. (1962) United Artists 15024(LP)/Blue Note B21S-28353(CD).
- Oliver Nelson. *Blues and the Abstract Truth*. (1961) Impulse 5(LP)/MCAD-5659(CD).
- The Sextet of Orchestra USA. *Mack the Knife and other Berlin Theatre Songs of Kurt Weill*. RCA LSP-3498(LP).
- Gunther Schuller/John Lewis. *Jazz Abstractions*. (1960) Atlantic 1365(LP).

Jerome Harris Discography:

As leader:

- Algorithms*. Minor Music 1011(LP).
- In Passing*. Muse Records MR 5386(LP)/MCD 5386(CD)

Representative discography as bandmember:

- Ran Blake. *Rapport*. Arista/Novus AN 3006(CD).
- Robert Dick. *Third Stone From The Sun*. New World 80435-2(CD).
- Bill Frisell. *Rambler*. ECM 1287(CD).
- Jon Hassell/Brian Eno. *Fourth World: Possible Musics*. Editions EG EGS 107.
- Julius Hemphill. *Julius Hemphill Big Band*. Elektra/Musician 9 60831-1.
- Jay Hoggard. *Riverside Dance*. India Navigation IN-1068.
- Oliver Lake. *Prophet*. Black Saint BSR-0044.

Amina Claudine Meyers. *Amina*. RCA/Novus 3030-1-N.
 Amina Claudine Meyers. *In Touch*. RCA/Novus 3064-1-N.
 Amina Claudine Meyers. *Women In (E)Motion*. T&M 102.
 Sonny Rollins. *Dancing in the Dark*. Milestone M-9155.
 Sonny Rollins. *Don't Ask*. Milestone M-9090.
 Sonny Rollins. *Don't Stop the Carnival*. Milestone M-55005.
 Sonny Rollins. *Falling in Love With Jazz*. Milestone M-9179.
 Sonny Rollins. *Here's to the People*. Milestone MCD-9194-2.
 Ned Rothenberg Double Band. *Real and Imagined Time*. Moers Music 03006 CD.
 Ned Rothenberg Double Band. *Overlays*. Moers Music 02074 CD.
 George Russell. *Live in an American Time Spiral*. Soul Note SN 1049.
 Henry Threadgill. *Song Out of My Trees*. Black Saint 120154-2.

Bandmembers' Discographies:

As leaders:

E. J. Allen. *Another's Point of View*. Enja ENJ-8004(CD).
 Ray Anderson Alligatory Band. *Don't Mow Your Lawn*. Enja ENJ-8070-2(CD).*
 Ray Anderson. *Blue Bred in the Bone*. Enja ENJ-5081(CD).
 Ray Anderson. *Every One of Us*. Gramavision R2-79471(CD).
 Ray Anderson. *It Just So Happens*. Enja ENJ-5037(CD).
 Ray Anderson. *Old Bottles--New Wine*. Enja ENJ-79628-2(CD).
 Ray Anderson. *Right Down Your Alley*. Soul Note 121087-2(CD).
 Ray Anderson. *Wishbone*. Gramavision R21S-79454(CD).
 Don Byron. *Don Byron Plays the Music of Mickey Katz*. Elektra/Nonesuch 79313-2(CD).
 Don Byron. *Music For Six Musicians*. Nonesuch 79354.
 Don Byron. *Tuskegee Experiment*. Elektra/Nonesuch 79280-2(CD).
 Marty Ehrlich. *Can You Hear a Motion?* Enja ENJ-8052-2(CD).
 Marty Ehrlich. *Pliant Plaint*. Enja ENJ-5065-2(CD).
 Marty Ehrlich. *Side by Side*. Enja ENJ-6092-2(CD).
 Marty Ehrlich. *Traveller's Tale*. Enja ENJ-79630-2(CD).
 Marty Ehrlich/Darkwoods Ensemble. *Emergency Peace*. New World/Countercurrents 80409-2(CD).
 Bobby Previte. *Empty Suits*. Gramavision R2 79447(CD).*
 Bobby Previte. *Music of the Moscow Circus*. Gramavision R2 79466(CD).*
 Bobby Previte. *Slay the Suitors*. Avant/Disc Union AVAN 036(CD).*
 Bobby Previte. *Weather Clear, Track Fast*. Enja ENJ-79667-2(CD).
 Bill Ware. *Long and Skinny*. Knitting Factory Works 131.

* Jerome Harris featured as band member

Available from New World:

Cecil Taylor/*Unit* (80201-2)
 Cecil Taylor/*3 Phasis* (80303-2)
 Steve Kuhn/*Mostly Ballads* (80351-2)
 Jay McShann/*Going to Kansas City* (80358-2)
 Earl Hines/*Earl Hines plays Ellington* (80361-2)

George Lewis/*Changing With the Times* (80434-2)
The Far East Side Band/*Caverns* (80458-2)

Available from New World/CounterCurrents:

The New York Composers Orchestra/*Works by Ehrlich, Holcomb, Horvitz, Wieselman* (80397-2)
The Jazz Passengers/*Implement Yourself* (80398-2)
Kamikaze Ground Crew/*The Scenic Route* (80400-2)
Butch Morris/*Dust to Dust* (80408-2)
Marty Ehrlich and The Dark Woods Ensemble/*Emergency Peace* (80409-2)
Tom Varner/*Long Night Big Day* (80410-2)
Paul Drescher - Ned Rothenberg/*Opposites Attract* (80411-2)
New York Composers Orchestra/*First Program in Standard Time: Works by Braxton, Pickett, Sharp, Pevite, Holcomb, Horvitz* (80418-2)
Bob Nell/*Why I Like Coffee* (80419-2)
Mario Pavone/*Toulon Days* (80420-2)
Robert Dick/*Third Stone From the Sun* (80435-2)
David Taylor/*Past Tells* (80436-2)
The Bern Nix Trio/*Alarms and Excursions* (80437-2)
Kamikaze Ground Crew/*Madam Marie's Temple of Knowledge* (80438-2)
Joey Baron/*Raised Pleasure Dot* (80449-2)
Human Feel/*Welcome to Malpesta* (80450-2)
Ed Jackson/*Wake Up Call* (80451-2)
Mario Pavone/*Song For (Septet)* (80452-2)
Dave Douglas/*In Our Lifetime* (80471-2)

Executive producer: Arthur Moorhead

Producer: Mark Helias

Recording and mix engineer: James Farber

Assistant mix engineer: Tony Gonzalez

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JEROME HARRIS 80472-2
HIDDEN IN PLAIN VIEW

- 1 *Iron Man* (Eric Dolphy) (6:01)
- 2 *G. W.* (Eric Dolphy) (6:52)
- 3 *Out to Lunch* (Eric Dolphy) (7:00)
- 4 *Emanation* (Jerome Harris) (3:48)
- 5 *Mandrake* (Eric Dolphy) (6:41)
- 6 *245/Les* (Eric Dolphy) (7:32)
- 7 *Far Cry* (Eric Dolphy) (5:19)
- 8 *Hidden in Plain View* (Jerome Harris) (7:23)
- 9 *Miss Ann* (Eric Dolphy) (7:26)

Jerome Harris, acoustic bass guitar

Bobby Previte, drums

Bill Ware, vibraphone

Don Byron, clarinet

E. J. Allen, trumpet

Marty Ehrlich, alto saxophone, bass clarinet (on *Iron Man*, *Mandrake*, and *Far Cry*)

Ray Anderson, trombone

Don Byron appears by courtesy of Nonesuch Records

Bill Ware appears by courtesy of Warner Brothers Records

Bobby Previte appears by courtesy of Enja Records

Jerome Harris uses La Bella Strings

All arrangements and transcriptions by Jerome Harris

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