

GEORGE SCHULLER
Tenor Tantrums

New World Records 80522

A discophile's education proceeds in lockstep with the arrival of recordings of heretofore-unheard fare. A couple of recent CDs showcase the work of Roman Haubenstock-Ramati (1919–1994), an important albeit relatively obscure participant in European art music's avant-garde. In attempting to infuse coherence into a report I'm doing for my Webzine, it did occur to me as I sat there awash in "difficult" music's irascible pleasures that Haubenstock-Ramati's *Concerto a Tre* is easily confused with a good deal of improvisational and improvisational-seeming jazz. Nor is this the first time this perception has stopped by. Put another way, one hears aspects of jazz as having entered a most intriguing terrain, parts of which, in purely jazz terms, lie largely uncharted. One is reminded of *F Troop*, the old sitcom with its spoofily savvy Fugawi Indians. The odd tribal handle looks back to a joke about how a Native American motley en route to a war council acquired its name. The clueless point man turns to his traveling companions and asks, Wherethefugawi, Indians?

Wherethefugawi, indeed. We call these times postmodern—in left-academic circles, along with multicultural, an uncomfortably politicized term. We'd best apply postmodern narrowly: that which succeeds modernism's agglomerate of schools and loose associations, their forward-facing thrust appearing to have stalled, thus preparing the way for a vacuum into which steps who knows what. Critics and journalists observe symptoms of exhaustion in the classical sector (not to mention pop, another story and a bore). The postwar avant-gardists, to anyone who took the trouble to notice, looked very much like an Irreversibility—the Wave of the Future, the One and Only Viability. Elitism has become a dirty word, Ozymandias lies a ruin in sand, and then there was the Thousand-Year Reich.... At moments such as these one trots out a line of Bobby Burns's concerning rodentian and human aspiration. If we narrow our field of vision to top-tier music, it's a case of Sugar-Puff Cerealists having trounced the Serialists.

Yet in so bemoaning art music's dumbing-down, we overlook an area of rather extraordinary, tough-minded vitality. As a personal, wherethefugawi thing, fearful that I'll miss the body and tag the shadow, I find my reluctance to pin labels a symptom of encouragement. Am I talking about jazz? It delights me to say, Perhaps. The seasoned listener recognizes those gestures, however scantily strewn, here classical, there jazz, and so on into misfirings, hybrids, and crossover mutants. For jazz, the most readily identifiable flags occur in the music's rhythmic architecture, harmonic preference, free-form virtuoso turns in monologue, dialogue, and ensemble, or more broadly stated, a condition of déshabillé, particularly by way of comparison with classical's rather more formal, tight-buttoned demeanor, though the exuberantly insouciant music of someone like Vinko Globokar certainly tugs at one's distinction. However, before we follow this line, let's address the medium on which George Schuller and his delightfully disquieting Schulldogs command our attention.

Most audiophiles judge recorded sound and the hardware that raises it to a facsimile of life in terms of verisimilitude: how close is X to the Real Thing? If we are thinking of a baritone with piano accompanist, a string quartet, an orchestra, it's a relatively easy call. (It really isn't, but let's move along.) If the bulk of one's listening has been to classical in concert and on disc, he inclines to the understanding that those various phenomena we agree to call jazz bear a most peculiar relationship to recording. Normally, we like to think of an archival medium as, at best, a splendid souvenir, at

worst, a cosmeticized cadaver. What better place to give received wisdom a punch in the nose? *I suggest to you that recording is jazz's ideal state.* Yes, really! If we agree with the audiophile precept of a lifelike ideal, a well-engineered disc played on a sound system capable of good resolution provides us with a far cleaner window on subtleties of ensemble, micro-detail, dimension, and dynamic and timbral gradation than we're ever likely to hear at a jazz venue, since most of these employ amplification the crudity of which is surpassed only by ear-searing implementation. That this holds for small rooms as well may have something to do with rock's baleful influence: the imploding of eardrums as earnest of sincerity, eructations of thuggish machismo, androgynous angst, the whole ball of howitzer wax. One has not had his money's worth unless he exits hearing-impaired.

Classical-music zealots are generally connoisseurs of acoustically superior venues as illustrious as Amsterdam's Concertgebouw or obscure as the Troy Savings Bank Music Hall in upstate New York. By hilarious contrast, one thinks of the seamy-side sites where jazz ensembles tend to perform. Indeed, the raunchier, the better, i.e., authentic, keeping the faith. The roots are deep in both traditions; our perception of formality vis-à-vis informality is no recurring accident, however austere or "experimental" the jazz-side activity. (Unfortunate term, that. One has a picture of musicians in lab coats and pocket-protectors playing to fruit flies.)

Thoughts about recording as its own kind of art form, or at the very least artisanship, quite naturally segue to thoughts about labels (with, of course, New World on the side of the angels—else I'd not have mentioned it). Our topic is new music, Schuller's to be precise, and thus we ignore old music on obsolete media and in CD reissue as belonging to a separate universe. Enough for now to say that without these memoirs, a discophile's life (and indeed a creative musician's) would be that of the proverbial dog. George Schuller and his Schulldogs enjoy in this regard a most knowing and fruitful relationship to history. If, then, we dwell in the Now, we must surely affirm that jazz on recording invokes the image of a fork in the road: to the oft-trod side, the dull, the easy, the cool, the bland; to the other, peaks of astonishment, anarchic rifts—Wherethefugawi Country. But I offer too simplistic a dichotomy. It is not really a question of stale and fresh and the music businesses that traffic in either. Just as certain jazz performer-composers expand upon idioms earlier coined by art music's avant-garde, similarly adventuresome performer-composers give homage to jazz figures whose outbound language is yet to reveal symptoms of fatigue. Just as divinity and the devil dwell in the details, the freshness is in the doing. We have as a pudding's proof Schuller's turn on Ornette Coleman's *Free*. After a duly straight resurrection of Coleman's scalar module, Dave Ballou's trumpet and Tony Malaby's and George Garzone's saxophones engage in a cast-adrift excursion as if to remind us that salubrious outbursts are what we're about. When we arrive at *Tenor Tantrums*, we intuit the subtleties separating this thoroughly free improvisation, so announced, from the remainder of the program's less-than-more-firmly set ground rules.

While at work at these remarks, serendipity provided me with a Dutch CD, *Joy of a Toy*. The Eric Boeren Quartet (spelled 4tet) offers two versions of *Free* which renew one's faith in music's enchanting diversity. Boeren's percussionist, Han Bennink, lives up to his extrovert standard. Schuller is the more deliberate ensemble player. Indeed, Schuller's role is for the most part remarkably modest, though certainly not bland: his hyperkinetics more than keep pace with those of his reeds in the abovementioned *Tenor Tantrums*. In the appropriately titled *Nameless* (for this listener, a little masterpiece), George Schuller sounds next to absent from the luxuriant sonorities of Ed Schuller's bass and interwoven saxes. The attentive listener hears new music as good when it

surprises by virtue of turns taken and rejected. The tempos here are largely jazz. The Wherethefugawi aspect occupies relationships. As a parlor game for one, attempt on first listening to predict the music's moves. It's often not difficult and sometimes—the best times—impossible.

Was it Vladimir Horowitz who, when asked to characterize the difference between classical and jazz pianists, observed that the latter don't play wrong notes? The skills even journeymen instrumentalists bring to jazz remain for me an abiding wonder. High-altitude coherence is quite another matter. George Schuller's ideas sound to this listener to have found in these Schulldogs their perfect executants. Though trumpeter Dave Ballou appears in but two numbers, *Free* and *The Symptoms* (full-bore and muted), it's clear that his contributions are critical to success. One wants to walk up and pick fruit from Ed Schuller's bass. Its palpability apart, Ed Schuller's playing propels the music on the securest of footings and, as I say, his instrument's riches are something to hear (thanks in no small measure to the exceptional engineering of Jon Rosenberg and Michael Brorby). The centrality of George Garzone and Tony Malaby to George Schuller's thinking is obvious.

The Schulldogs have been at it as such for about three years. George's musical association with his older brother, Ed, dates back to their teens. Both were raised in an atmosphere conducive to the challenges of time-keeping, improvisation, and composition. Playing together seemed as natural as growing up together. (Their father, Gunther Schuller, has proudly employed both of his sons on various projects over the years, including recent recordings as significant as Joe Lovano's *Rush Hour*, and the rediscovered bebop guitarist Bill DeArango's *Anything Went*.) Garzone came into the picture in the mid-eighties as the younger Schuller often subbed with The Fringe, a legendary free-blowing trio based in Boston. (Both Ed and Garzone appear on George's first recording, *Lookin' Up From Down Below*.) Indeed, it was Garzone who, albeit indirectly, gave the group its handle by nicknaming George "Schulldog." (The honoree has had his revenge or returned the compliment by placing Garzone squarely under the banner.) George first encountered Tony Malaby at The Festival at Sandpoint's jazz camp in Idaho in 1996, where Malaby was enrolled as a student but, according to George, was already playing "like an old master." The relationship with Ballou goes back to the early nineties when both were participants of the Boston jazz scene. Ballou has also been a regular member of Schuller's twelve-piece band, Orange Then Blue, since 1991.

The listener's sense of single-mindedness, of interpretive coherence, stems from a unity of view born of acclimation. The ability to listen to one another in an intuitive, creative fashion in a group the size of Schulldogs allows for greater freedoms of individual movement than is the case in, for example, Schuller's Orange Then Blue. Apart from the germ of a tune, a Schulldog format remains by and large open. Rather than employing programmed changes, the ensemble works with and off the sparest of indications—a chord perhaps, a phrase, or, in George's words, a bass groove. The present program's payments of homage, to Ornette Coleman and Bill Evans, hint in broad terms at the Janus-faced direction the Schulldogs prefer to take. George describes the challenge posed by Evans's *Loose Bloose* is in the doing, absent piano. He mentions, too, that this lovely piece is rarely played. One cannot but infer a strong sense of mission.

So, Wherethefugawi? The tempi, harmonic interactions, idiomatic energies, and ensemble virtuosity bear witness to jazz, absent arty ambiguity. All the more remarkable, then, the absence of cliché.

—Mike Silverton

Mike Silverton is editor of La Folia, www.lafolia.com.

GEORGE SCHULLER—drummer, composer, arranger, producer—a native of New York City—moved to the Boston area in 1967 where he was raised and educated, and later graduated from the New England Conservatory of Music in 1982. For the next twelve years, Schuller was a fixture on the Boston area jazz scene performing with—among others—Herb Pomeroy, Jaki Byard, Jerry Bergonzi, George Garzone, Mick Goodrick, Ran Blake, Billy Pierce, John LaPorta, and Hal Crook. In 1984, he co-founded the twelve-piece ensemble Orange Then Blue, which has recorded several acclaimed albums over the past 15 years, including the most recent release *Hold The Elevator*. The group has toured extensively in the U.S., Canada, the Middle East, and Europe. Schuller released his first album as a leader in 1990, entitled *Lookin' Up From Down Below*, with special guests Joe Lovano and Tiger Okoshi.

In 1995 Schuller appeared on Lovano's critically acclaimed album *Rush Hour*. He is currently a member of Tom Varner's "American Songs" Trio, Matt Darriau's Ballin' the Jack, Free Range Rat, Lisa Thorson & Co., and The Tom Beckham Qt. Over the past 15 years, he has performed and/or recorded with many of today's leading musicians, including Dee Dee Bridgewater, Lee Konitz, Nnenna Freelon, Toots Thielemans, Danilo Perez, Dave Douglas, Kenny Werner, Wynton Marsalis, Bill DeArango, George Adams, Fred Hersch, Mark Helias, Mose Allison, and The Smithsonian Jazz Masterworks Orchestra.

In 1987, Schuller received a Massachusetts Artist Foundation Fellowship for Music Composition as well as an NEA Composition Grant in 1995. His compositions and arrangements have been recorded by Orange Then Blue, Ed Schuller, Mike Metheny, Your Neighborhood Sax Quartet, Wilder/Woodman/LaPorta Sextet, Mili Bermejo and Lisa Thorson. When not performing, Schuller has found himself on the other side of the glass producing several albums including recordings by Orange Then Blue, Luciana Souza, Ed Schuller, the Jazz Composers Alliance, Mili Bermejo, and Lisa Thorson.

Schuller presently resides in Brooklyn (since 1994) where he freelances in the New York City area leading his own groups including The Schulldogs, Ruckus, Chump Change, Jiggle, and Orange Then Blue.

Saxophonist and composer **Tony Malaby** was born in Tucson, Arizona, in 1964. He attended Arizona State University in Tempe, and William Patterson College in Wayne, New Jersey. His teachers included Joe Lovano, Steve Coleman, Rufus Reid, Jim McNeely, George Garzone, and Chuck Marohnic. He has performed throughout the western United States and Mexico under the auspices of the Lila Wallace–Readers Digest Fund, Westaff, and the Arizona Commission for the Arts. Malaby has received fellowships to the Festival at Sandpoint and the Banff Centre for the Arts.

Since moving to New York in 1995, Malaby has been active as a leader and sideman. He performs regularly with his quartet Sabino, which features guitarist Ben Monder, bassist Michael Formanek, and drummer Billy Mintz. Malaby has become a regular member of groups led by Kenny Werner, Tim Berne, Marty Ehrlich, Dave Ballou, Mark Helias, Tom Varner, Dave Berkman, Michael

Formanek, and George Schuller. He has also performed with Dave Douglas, Bobby Previte, Mark Dresser, Dave Liebman, Marc Copland, Tim Berne, George Garzone, Ellery Eskelin, Drew Gress, Mark Feldman, Sam Newsome, The Mingus Big Band, The Mingus Dynasty, Baikida Carroll, and Joey DeFrancesco.

George Garzone is one of the most respected saxophonists of our time, and has quietly gained recognition from all jazz corners of the world. A veteran all-around improviser, Garzone has appeared on more than forty recordings, including albums with Mike Mainieri, Luciana Souza, Bob Moses, Danilo Perez, Ingrid Jenson, Orange Then Blue, Gary Burton, Gunther Schuller, and many others. Garzone is a founding member of The Fringe (with John Lockwood and Bob Gullotti) — a free-blowing jazz trio. The Fringe has performed together for more than twenty years in the Boston area. In addition, they have recorded several CDs on Soul Note and Northeastern Records.

More recently, Garzone has made New York his residence and has signed a multi-record deal with NYC Records, releasing three critically acclaimed albums accompanied by Joey Calderazzo, Lenny White, and Bill Stewart. His release entitled *Four's and Two's* was recorded with longtime associate Joe Lovano and received 4 stars from *Down Beat* magazine. Garzone has also been an important educator during his entire career, and his students benefit from his excellence in both mainstream and avant styles within the jazz genre. Some of his former students have included Josh Redman, Branford Marsalis, and Danilo Perez. No longer a best-kept secret among students and fellow musicians, George Garzone is taking center stage among today's jazz elite.

Bassist **Ed Schuller** began playing at age 15—after short stints with the guitar and the clarinet—while attending high school in the Boston area. In 1972, he entered the New England Conservatory, where he studied acoustic bass with Larry Wolf of the Boston Symphony and composition/theory with Joe Maneri. Ed began working professionally by his late teens and played his first tour of the U.S. with guitarist Pat Martino in 1975. After returning from the road, he moved to the New York area and began working with musicians such as Jaki Byard, Lee Konitz, Tim Berne, Paul Motian, Jim Pepper, Joe Lovano, Bill Frisell, Mal Waldron, Steve Lacy, Gary Valente, Jeanne Lee, Billy Bang, Gunther Schuller, Perry Robinson, and many others as well as groups such as Night Ark, the Mingus Epitaph Orchestra, The Smithsonian Jazz Masterworks Orchestra, and The New England Ragtime Ensemble.

In addition to having toured extensively in Europe, Australia, South America, and the U.S., Ed has recorded numerous albums over the past twenty-two years. Since 1991 he has recorded five albums as a leader and currently heads his own group, The Eleventh Hour Band. The title refers to the "11th hour negotiations" that took place in early 1991 as a last-ditch effort to avert the start of the Gulf War. Ed describes his music as *"a melding of seemingly opposite approaches into a unified whole. For me life and music are inseparable — most of what I've learned about life philosophically and spiritually has been made clear to me either directly or indirectly through music."*

Composer/trumpet player **Dave Ballou** can be heard in a wide variety of settings. He has toured with such artists as Clark Terry, Shelia Jordan, Dewey Redman, Bobby Previte, LaMonte Young, Maria Schneider, Cameron Brown, The Smithsonian Masterworks Orchestra, Woody Herman, and Orange Then Blue. Dave has also performed with Joe Lovano, David Liebman, George Garzone, Billy Hart, Kenny Werner, Jay McShann, Gunther Schuller and Milt Hinton. Recently, he recorded the theme for "The NewsHour Featuring Jim Lehrer," and is one of the substitute players re-

creating the Harry James solo in *Sing, Sing, Sing* for the Broadway musical *Fosse*. He has recorded two CDs for the SteepleChase label: *Amongst Ourselves*—a quartet featuring Tony Malaby, Jeff Williams, and Michael Formanek, and *Volition*—a trio featuring Cameron Brown and Jeff Williams.

Dave received a BM from Berklee College of Music in 1986 and an MA from the University of New Hampshire in 1991. He teaches trumpet and improvisation as well as Schoenberg counterpoint and harmony to students of all levels. In 1999 he was a Senior Visiting Artist at the Banff Centre in Banff, Alberta, Canada, and has taught at the Maine Jazz Camp since 1991.

SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

George Schuller

Lookin' Up From Down Below. GM Recordings GM3013 CD.

with Orange Then Blue

Funkallero. GM Recordings GM3023 CD.

Hold the Elevator: Live in Europe and Other Haunts. GM Recordings GM3040 CD.

Orange Then Blue. GM Recordings GM3006 CD.

Where Were You? GM Recordings GM3012 CD.

While You Were Out... GM Recordings GM3028 CD.

with others

An Answer to Your Silence. Luciana Souza, NYC Records 6030-2 (as producer).

Anything Went. Bill DeArango, GM Recordings GM3027 CD.

Autumn in New England. Eugene Maslov, GM Recordings GM3022 CD.

Casa Corazon. Mili Bermejo, Xenophile GLCD 4016.

Double Dribble. Miles Donahue, Timeless SJP 392.

Jumpin' in the Future. Gunther Schuller, GM Recordings GM3010 CD.

Mystic Mainstream. Bevan Manson, A Records AL 73169.

Playing for Keeps. LaPorta/Wilder/Woodman, GM Recordings GM3026 CD.

Resonance. Lisa Thorson, GM Recordings GM3039 CD.

Rush Hour. Joe Lovano, Blue Note CDP 7243-8-29269 2 4.

The Window Up Above. Tom Varner, New World 80552-2.

Tony Malaby

Cosas. Joey Sellers/Tony Malaby, 9 Winds NWCD0171.

Dave Scott/Tony Malaby Quartet. Dave Scott/Tony Malaby, 9 Winds NWCD0194.

with others

Amongst Ourselves. Dave Ballou Quartet, SteepleChase SCCD31436.

Los Gauchos II. Guillermo Kline, Sunnyside Records SSC-1082.

Nature of the Beast. Michael Formanek, Enja ENJ-93082.

South Winds. Satoko Fuji Orchestra, Leo Lab CD 037.

George Garzone

Alone. NYC Records 6018.

Four's and Two's. NYC Records 6024.

Moodiology. NYC Records.

with The Fringe

It's Time for The Fringe. Soul Note SN 121205.
Live in Israel. Soul Note SN 121305.
with others
An American Diary: Folklore. Mike Mainieri, NYC Records 6026.
An Answer to Your Silence. Luciana Souza, NYC Records 6030-2.
The Journey. Danilo Perez, RCA Novus 63166-4.
Where Were You? Orange Then Blue, GM Recordings GM3012 CD.

Ed Schuller
Mu-Point. Tutu Records CD 888-154.
Snake Dancing. Tutu Records CD 888-188.
To Know Where One Is. GM Recordings GM3019 CD.
with others
Coming Down the Mountain. Joe Maneri, hatOLOGY 501.
Mingus Epitaph. Charles Mingus, CBS Records C2K 45428.
Misterioso. Paul Motian, Soul Note SN121174.
Rated X. Unit X, Timescraper TSCR 9618.
Rush Hour. Joe Lovano, Blue Note CDP 7243-8-29269 2 4.

Dave Ballou
Amongst Ourselves. SteepleChase SCCD31436.
Volition. SteepleChase SCCD31460.
with others
Hold the Elevator: Live in Europe and Other Haunts. GM Recordings GM3040 CD.
Large One. Peter Herborn, Jazzline JL1154-2/EFA 01174-2.
When Children Smile. Steve LaSpina, SteepleChase SCCD31419.
While You Were Out.... Orange Then Blue, GM Recordings GM3027 CD.
The Window Up Above. Tom Varner, New World 80552-2.

Producer: George Schuller
All tunes recorded at Sound On Sound, NYC, August, 1998 (except for 2,5,9)
Engineer: Jon Rosenberg
Assistant Engineer: Glen Tarachow
Mixed at Tedesco Studios, Paramus, NJ, March, 1999
Engineer: Jon Rosenberg
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George Garzone appears courtesy of NYC Records.

Tenor Tantrums is a free, collective improvisation.

URWUP = You Are What You Play

Spatial Positioning: Malaby, left of center; Garzone, right of center.

Political Leanings: Malaby, left of center; Garzone, nowhere near center.

Malaby solos first on *Slightly Round* & *Tenor Tantrums*. Garzone solos first on *No Hazmats*.

For more information, visit George Schuller's website: <http://www.pipeline.net/~odetobe>

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TENOR TANTRUMS

80522-2

- 1 *Free* (Ornette Coleman; arr. George Schuller) 2:52
- 2 *Slightly Round* (George Schuller) 7:06
- 3 URWUP (George Schuller) 7:11
- 4 *Tenor Tantrums* (George Schuller) 9:56
- 5 *Loose Bloose* (Bill Evans; arr. George Schuller) 7:26
- 6 *The Symptoms* (George Schuller) 4:54
- 7 *Boogie Two Shoes* (George Schuller) 9:12
- 8 *Nameless* (George Schuller) 5:53
- 9 *No Hazmats* (George Schuller) 6:52

Tony Malaby, soprano and tenor sax; George Garzone, tenor sax (except 6); Ed Schuller, bass; George Schuller, drums and trinkets; Dave Ballou, trumpet (on 1, 6)

All compositions Schulldog Music (BMI) except where noted. *Free* is published by MJQ Music. *Loose Bloose* is published by Folkways Music (BMI).

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