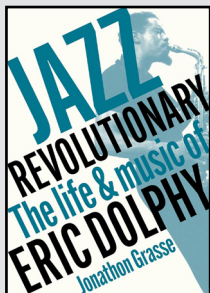


IN PRINT



Jazz Revolutionary: The Life & Music of Eric Dolphy
Jonathon Grasse (Jawbone Press)
by Ken Dryden

Multi-instrumentalist Eric Dolphy (1928-1964) made his mark during his brief time in the spotlight as a leader, sideman and composer, though critics—especially (white) *DownBeat* writers—did everything they could in that era to sabotage music they were unable to comprehend. In *Jazz Revolutionary: The Life & Music of Eric Dolphy*, author Jonathon Grasse explores Dolphy's life and music in far greater depth than previous writers have, fully immersing himself in his subject's recordings. Dolphy's dedication to music began with his classical studies, though he was already woodshedding with friends, playing jazz by his teen years. His brief tenure with drummer Roy Porter resulted in his first recordings. But the draft encouraged him to proactively enlist in the Army during the Korean conflict, where he could opt to be placed in the band and avoid combat.

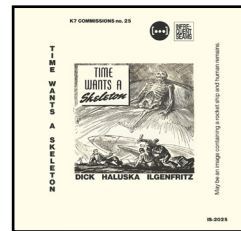
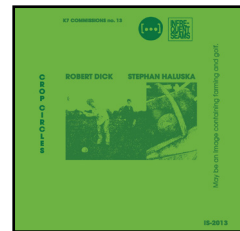
Chico Hamilton hired Dolphy in 1958, and he made

several recordings with the drummer, though the author notes the often uninspired arrangements held up his growth as a soloist. Oddly enough, these were Dolphy's peak earning years. His novel approach to playing alto saxophone, flute and bass clarinet was fueled in part by his discussions with John Coltrane and Ornette Coleman. Dolphy's contributions to Coleman's groundbreaking album *Free Jazz* drew him additional critical attention. Signed to Prestige in 1960, he would record prolifically for them as both a leader and sideman, highlighted by his outstanding leader debut *Outward Bound* and his collaborations with trumpeter Booker Little and pianist Mal Waldron, before being dropped only a year later.

Dolphy's relationship with the volatile Charles Mingus would come and go. Yet Dolphy was inspired by the bassist's writing and fellow musicians and some of his most memorable solos are found on Mingus recordings, especially the 1964 concerts. Dolphy's friendship and work with John Coltrane is explored by Grasse in detail, including his contributions to the *Africa/Brass* large ensemble orchestrations as well as a major soloist in the landmark 1961 Village Vanguard recordings. Grasse argues, however, that the initially released tracks featuring Dolphy are inferior to the alternates issued long after his death.

The writer's exhaustive history and critique of Eric Dolphy's music corrects errors and gaps left by earlier writers and his honest analysis of recordings by Dolphy (whose centennial is 2028) proves refreshing.

For more info visit jawbonepress.com



Crop Circles
Robert Dick/Stephan Haluska (Infrequent Seams)
Time Wants a Skeleton
Robert Dick, Stephan Haluska, James Ilgenfritz
(Infrequent Seams)
by Brad Cohan

Among the many trailblazing flute players who've performed wonders with their instrument, one who's in a class all by himself is New York native, 75-year-old composer-improviser Robert Dick—a visionary whose singular voice covers a wide net. Over five decades he has pioneered methodologies on flute in radical ways. His aesthetic is informed, in part, by what he's dubbed The Glissando Headjoint®, a pitch and tone-manipulating extension of the flute similar to guitar effects pedals.

Last year's *Crop Circles* represents the first-time meeting of the elder statesman Dick and the young Cleveland-based harpist Stephan Haluska. Out of the gate, their partnership is instant organic bliss, built on high-level synergy, a shared set of freewheeling ideas and an affinity for boundless unconventional approaches. The five improvisations that make up this brain-scrambling set defy any semblance of traditional framework. And that's Dick and Haluska's mission: going against the grain of the classic flute/harp duo format. While there are brief flashes of the flute's warm embrace and the harp's dreamlike pluck, this like-minded tandem sketch idiosyncratic and vivid, and yields fields of sound that beg all sorts of questions, primarily of the "how did they do that?" variety. That deep mysticism is what makes this recording such a rewarding, quirk-filled and thought-provoking listen. The foundation is laid as soon as the heady constellations of tones and textures—plus Dick's mangled and gruff vocalizations—rain down on the revelatory album opener, "O Tree Eat the Fish". The title track is a glorious seven-minute-long spattering of contorted breathing exercises and dancing flute lines guided by percussive clinks and bangs. The following "Psychogram" suggests the electronic noisescapes of *Wolf Eyes* bolstered by the cascading thrum of a harp. "Narcissism Meets Necessity" is a freakish slice of skronky and twangy Americana folk.

The above album may well have made such an impression on Infrequent Seams label chief, bassist James Ilgenfritz, that it led to his desire to musically partake in the follow-up, *Time Wants a Skeleton*. The heft of his contrabass in all of its slow-burning, bowing fury and intensely rhythmic and squawking glory, adds both spectral and primal layers to Dick and Haluska's already colorful duo expanse. The eye-opener in the vibe of this album is very much antithetical to its predecessor, in that the program's seven spontaneous pieces embrace abstract and minimalist forms that reveal understated tension and emotionally heavy resonance, as on "How do you can it to deny?" and "Slow Splash". But it's not all meditative. On the grinding logic of "Recombinant Mind", the trio switches into attack mode; on "Sunbathing with Jonah", Dick scats and grunts like a demonic figure. At the root of his explorations is a fearless and uncompromising nature where sonic possibilities are infinite.

These two recordings are definitive proof of Dick's and his collaborators' forward-looking language.

For more info visit infrequentseams.bandcamp.com. Dick is at Downtown Music Gallery Aug. 12 and Soup & Sound Aug. 17. See Calendar.

Brooklyn
Conservatory
of Music

**CREATIVITY.
TEAMWORK.
PERSONAL VOICE.**



**EXPLORE FALL 2025
JAZZ PROGRAMS
FOR TEENS & ADULTS**



58 SEVENTH AVE BROOKLYN NY 11217 • BKCM.ORG/JAZZ

LIZZIE THOMAS
AWAKENING

8.8



ALBUM RELEASE SHOW @ DROM NYC
LIZZIE THE JAZZ SINGER.COM