

It probably has something to do with the nature of their work—every gig creating something new from scratch—that we have so many recordings of them, with more still surfacing after so many years. *The Duke of Wellington*—their duet recorded in March 1989, at the London venue of the same name and available as CD or download—shows quick, in-the-moment thinking, but also a camaraderie built over the years. It's a bright, clear recording, captured to DAT from the audience. Over three tracks (totaling 53 minutes), Bailey's amplified hollowbody and Stevens' snare, cymbals and pocket trumpet pierce the mix. There are wonderfully cantankerous passages, and immensely recognizable moments (such as Bailey's swoops on the volume control), but the surprises come when they fall into warm, very nearly jazzy grooves. Those passages don't last long and don't need to. They're the little fruits of a long association.

Drummer Paul Lovens came out of the parallel and often overlapping free improv conjurings in Germany and around the same time, England-born violinist and conceptual artist Jon Rose was planting seeds in Australia. They joined forces with Bailey for a trio in 1992 in a series Rose booked at the Berlin venue Podewil. It seems to have been a good day for them. The playing is exemplary and the interactions fast and bold over the course of several improvised pieces (available as a single file and only as download). The concert was preceded by a lecture on chaos accompanied by Rose on 19-string cello which, perhaps, set the mood.

Also included in the set, at Rose's request, was a solo piece by Bailey, whose appearances in Berlin were apparently scarce. In an insightful program note for the concert (and republished on his website), Rose wrote: "If Jimi Hendrix' major contribution to

guitar playing was the sophisticated manipulation of amplified sound through movement in space (i.e. controlled feedback), then Derek Bailey's main influence has probably been his use of the harmonic series as the main structure for pitch events and melodic invention...Bailey introduced and developed the Klangfarbenmelodie concepts of the Second Viennese School into an improvised guitar language."

Bailey's playing is easily one of the most recognizable among guitarists (at least to those who hear it), and it's not all attitude, though that adds to the charm. His music is engaging and challenging, and it's a pleasure to still be hearing it anew.

For more info visit confrontrecordings.com and thejonrosearchive.bandcamp.com

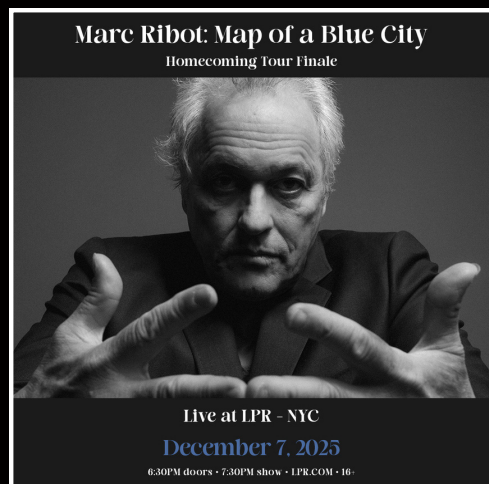


The Next Step Band: Live at Smalls
Kurt Rosenwinkel (Heartcore)
by Jim Motavalli

Guitarist Kurt Rosenwinkel's Next Step band, from almost 30 years ago, was an all-star affair, featuring Mark Turner (tenor), Ben Street (bass) and Jeff Ballard (drums), and, in 1996, for the all-originals *Live at Smalls*, Brad Mehldau (piano) was added on one track.

"A Shifting Design" opens with Rosenwinkel unaccompanied, before the music swings right into the full band. The leader's lengthy solo is reminiscent of an uptempo Pat Martino, before Turner digs in, with thick chording accompaniment provided by the guitarist. The "Use of Light" is a long ballad (almost 11 minutes), Rosenwinkel here playing more the role of composer than improviser. Opening with his hanging, flowing notes, the melody is a haunting one, as the piece has a gradual build, greatly aided by Ballard's discreet work behind the kit. Turner, speaking at length through his horn, is at his most adventurous. On the melodic, boppish "Zhivago" (one of the album's highpoints), Mehldau in his sole appearance supports Rosenwinkel's singing, exuberant solo, then steps out, initially sounding Monk-ishly spare, but soon building into McCoy Tyner-like sheets of sound. Turner, in a welcome intrusion, announces himself after the theme is restated. The short and tricky "Alpha Mega" showcases the guitarist's effects pedals and Turner's adeptness of utilizing short flurries. Ballard is also heard taking an eccentric solo before the knotty head returns. "A Life Unfolds" opens on a solo spotlight for the leader, the band entering with his wordless, mysterious, but effective vocals on top. He switches to piano on "The Next Step", a progressive bop number, reminiscent of the late '60s. Turner is on fire and Coltrane lit the match on this one! The compelling, 15-minute "Minor Blues" (recorded in Japan in 2000) caps off this welcome archival release as a bonus track.

For more info visit heartcore-records.com. Rosenwinkel is at Village Vanguard Dec. 2-7 (with Christian McBride Trio) and Chris' Jazz Cafe (Philadelphia, PA) Dec. 26-27 (as leader). See Calendar and 100 Miles Out.



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