

## IN PRINT



**Picture Infinity: Marshall Allen & The Sun Ra Arkestra Sibylle Zerr (In+Out)**  
by David Cristol

The raucous Sun Ra Arkestra didn't end when its initiator returned to Saturn in 1993, but continued under the guidance of tenor great John Gilmore for a short stint, then to the alto saxophone and electronic wind instrument (EWI) wizard Marshall Allen. After a long tenure with the Arkestra, the multi-instrumentalist took over its leadership beginning in 1995, a position Allen still holds as he nears age 102 (May 25). In this century, the German label IN+OUT released three albums by the Arkestra under Allen: *Live at the Paradox* (2009), *Babylon Live* (2015) and *Lights on a Satellite* (2024). Coincidentally, the latter title was also used the same year by Resonance for an unearthed 1978 live recording by the original Sun Ra Arkestra, a mission that started some 70 years ago.

*Picture Infinity: Marshall Allen & The Sun Ra Arkestra* is neither an Allen biography or a complete

panorama of the Arkestra. This book, first published in 2011 and now reappearing either as a stand alone artifact or as part of a bundle with the aforementioned CDs or LPs (one hand-signed by Allen), aims to document in words and photographs the 2008 tour that led to the first record issued on the label. The balance of images and text makes sense considering that the Arkestra is equal parts music and stage show with a strong visual component. The publication feels like a snapshot of a given moment in the band's odyssey, with some interesting insights such as the distinct approaches of Ra and Allen for leading the band, or the revelation that Allen has inherited a treasure trove of unrecorded Ra-penned compositions. The Arkestra is simultaneously building on its past and looking to the future, effectively making it an evolving entity as well as a time machine navigating in all directions of its history. The author includes excerpts of interviews with band members conducted at the time of writing, archival quotations of Ra and her own honest and down-to-earth observations on the proceedings.

The now-sprawling Ra literature started in grand style with John Szwed's *Space is the Place* (1997), and has continued with Arkestra trumpeter-alum Ahmed Abdullah's *A Strange Celestial Road* (2023) and now with this small, but certainly worthy addition.

For more info visit [inandout-records.com](http://inandout-records.com). Allen is at *Solar Myth* (Philadelphia, PA) Mar. 10 (with *Ghost Horizons*) and Mar. 13 (with *Dave Burrell*, *Bobby Zankel*, *Kresten Osgood*). See *100 Miles Out*.



**Borderless**  
Brian Charette (SteepleChase)  
by Pierre Giroux

Pianist-organist-keyboardist Brian Charette has always regarded the Hammond B3 organ as a full orchestra rather than just a specialty instrument, and *Borderless* stands as one of his most personal and daring statements yet. Recorded solo, mainly with new material in one or two takes without overdubs, the album honors an older jazz ethic: trust the moment, trust the instrument and let imperfections reveal the truth.

The album's program begins with "Minors Must Be Accompanied by Adults", one of nine originals. This minor-key blues makes a powerful statement, with its melodic impact and rhythmic drive, clearly influenced by legendary jazz organist Jack McDuff; Charette subtly extends the harmony just enough to keep the blues feeling slightly unsettled. "Sunrise" shifts the palette entirely, with Charette drawing on Hungarian scales and a shimmering vintage vibrato that predates Jimmy Smith's hard-swing dominance on the instrument. The result feels almost archaic in the best sense: an echo of early organists who balanced folk modality with jazz phrasing. "Blood Sun" embodies a

sincere gospel feeling, presented as a waltz that sways rather than marches. Charette's voicings evoke church harmony without being literal; it's music meant to bring people together. Antônio Carlos Jobim's "Corcovado", one of Charette's favorite bossa novas, features a warm, joyful vocal that feels conversational rather than performative. His phrasing respects Gene Lees' lyrics of understated melancholy, while allowing moments of playful inflection. "Bicoastal" (a bebop contrafact of Charlie Parker's "Confirmation") reaffirms swing with an intellectual edge. Charette navigates the familiar harmonic landscape with ease, adding asymmetrical accents and rhythmic shifts. It's a reminder that bebop, even on solo organ, remains a lively, adaptable form. Huey Lewis' "If This Is It" is transformed into a soulful organ sermon: stripped of its pop gloss, the tune exposes a strong harmonic core. Charette leans into the lyric's emotional resolve with sustained chords and dynamic swells to amplify its sincerity. This rendition's final section heightens the emotional journey. "Willow Weep for Me" feels strongly connected to the blues, with moments of sharp modern lines providing contrast. "Tadd's Delight" swings with familiar bebop melodies at a steady medium tempo. Charette appreciates the sophisticated harmonies of its composer Tadd Dameron, playing them with clarity and lightness. The closing selection, "Moody's Mood for Love", features Charette as singer—intimate, natural and focused on storytelling rather than showmanship.

Brian Charette's latest album isn't chasing the new just for novelty, but reaffirms that depth, curiosity and history are still the most reliable guides forward.

For more info visit [steeplechase.dk](http://steeplechase.dk). Charette is at *The Django* Mar. 4, *Mezzrow* Mar. 6-7, *Midnight Blue* Mar. 11, *Cellar Dog* Mar. 15 and *Albert's Bar* Mar. 20. He is also at *Poli Club* (Waterbury, CT) Mar. 13. See *Calendar* and *100 Miles Out*.



**New Morning**  
Jakob Bro Large Ensemble (Loveland Music)  
**Murasaki**  
Jakob Bro, Wadada Leo Smith, Marcus Gilmore (Loveland Music)  
by Jeff Cebulski

Two 2025 releases from Denmark's Loveland Music place the Danish guitarist (and label founder) Jakob Bro squarely in the forefront of the Euro-progressive community, as the generous Bro engages with both European and American musicians who are often given the reins. But the guitarist is the catalyst, and both albums here reflect his artistic mien and collaborative improvisational ethos.

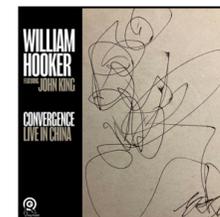
*New Morning* is separated into two sections. The first features wholly-improvised works from members of Bro's Large Ensemble, which includes longtime collaborators—Andrew D'Angelo (alto saxophone, bass clarinet), Jesper Zeuthen (alto), Anders Christensen (bass) and Jakob Høyer (drums). Others along for the session include Bill McHenry (tenor) and Kresten Osgood (drums), the latter contributing the album's second track, the "Osgood" drum solo. The opener, "Trio", begins as a pensive concoction from Zeuthen, with Søren Kjærgaard (piano) and Jeppe Skovbakke (electric bass). For his part, Bro makes his first appearance on "Tutti", a tone poem where he provides Terje Rypdal-ian texture for the saxophonists' dramatic dialogue. After D'Angelo's bass clarinet then alto solo track, "For Bro", the

album shifts to the leader's compositions. "Roots" harkens back to New Orleans gospel blues, serving as a preface to the remainder. "And They All Came Marching Out of the Woods" (originally heard on Bro's 2015 ECM leader debut *Gefion*) follows, led by Christensen's version of Thomas Morgan's original plodding bass line. This time Bro's Frisell-inspired melody passage is replaced by the horns, while he and Adi Zukanovic (keyboards) supply quietly edgy background; D'Angelo negotiates a twisting bass clarinet solo accompanied by Heyer's frenetic stick work. After a yearning "Bella Vista", the guitarist revisits "Black Is All Colors at Once" (which appears on his 2024 ECM album *Taking Turns*). McHenry gets the call here, his tenor beckoning a plaintive sentiment. The title tune closes the proceedings, with D'Angelo and friends mirroring McHenry's tone, but with an uplifting mien as the leader lends sensitive support.

*Murasaki*—with Bro, Wadada Leo Smith (trumpet) and Marcus Gilmore (drums)—is the result of collective, spontaneous inspiration prior to a planned European tour. While the guitarist has played with each before, this was this trio's first collaboration. Gilmore opens "Winnowing One" with a spirited solo. Bro's reverbed picking gives synthetic ambience to "Sonic Mountains", on which Smith bellows and Gilmore rides underneath. The trumpeter reaches into Miles Davis' early fusion exploits in "Yoyogi Park Dream", gently issuing a coned passage while the guitarist elliptically comps and Gilmore contributes a dramatic backdrop to his mates' dreamy expressions. With a quick trumpet aside, "Chronicles of Bending—Air Columns and Fire Discourses" leads to "Heart Language", Bro taking the lead with a thoughtful, hesitant pace, followed by Smith's fiery discourse atop Gilmore's agitated pounding. With Smith, the drummer extends the agitation on the trumpet-drum duo of "Imagine the Fire and Flames That Lights Up the Light World" and then has the final statement, "Winnowing Two", which culminates the session with a multi-rhythmic workout of drums and percussion.

The breadth and depth of these two albums testify to Bro's ability to reach into his and his friends' improvisational intuition and conjure remarkable results.

For more info visit [lovelandcph.bandcamp.com](http://lovelandcph.bandcamp.com). Bro is at *Village Vanguard* Mar. 31-Apr. 5. See *Calendar*.



**Convergence: Live in China**  
William Hooker feat. John King (Org Music)  
by Brad Cohan

Composer, improviser and a powerhouse at the drum kit, William Hooker is avant garde jazz royalty with decades of transformative and transcendent experimentation under his belt. In the annals of the Downtown scene, he was one of the first to marry free improvisation with noise and rock leanings through recorded and live-in-concert, all-inclusive partnerships with the likes of Sonic Youth (Thurston Moore, Lee Ranaldo, Jim O'Rourke), Elliott Sharp, and others that go back to the early '90s. Hooker's aesthetic and fearless, groundbreaking path is perfectly summed up in the title of his latest effort, *Convergence: Live in China*, with an emphasis on the word "convergence," which underscores his

status as an extremely underrated bandleader and collaborator.

In this duo set with composer, guitarist and violist John King, Hooker reveals a flurry of revelations. First, the pairing lives up to the title in the intuitive, physical and spiritual senses; the musical minds here intersect right from the first clobber of the drums and gnarly scratch of guitar, forming a bond that shakes the earth's very core. Second, Hooker is a tireless and powerful force of nature behind the kit, an absolute marvel of his instrument who defies age (he'll celebrate his 80th birthday this June). The album was birthed when organizers of the B10 festival in Shenzhen offered to fly Hooker in to perform. As he documents on his website of his long journey to Asia, Hooker brought King with him and "intended to rock it." And, man, this ear-searing pair most certainly did, laying the hammer down with sheer intensity, crushing volume and deep connection.

At a run time of nearly an hour—with three improvisational sections and two solo sections, leading up to the performance's conclusion—this live, recorded document deconstructs the blues, experimental rock, funk and improvisatory noise with sonically heavy abandon. King, known for his strings work commissioned by Kronos Quartet, Bang On A Can and for recordings released on John Zorn's Tzadik label, is the ideal complement to Hooker's monster blows; his caustic and frenzied riffs and wah-wah pedal-stomping fireworks channels Hendrix-like shredding action. *Convergence: Live in China* should especially appeal to guitar-drum duo enthusiasts of Bill Orcutt and Chris Corsano.

For more info visit [orgmusic.com](http://orgmusic.com). Hooker is at *Ibeam Brooklyn* Mar. 18. See *Calendar*.

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St. Peter's Church  
Manhattan  
4/26 5:00 p.m.

An Beal Bocht Cafe  
Bronx  
4/29 7:30 & 9:30 p.m.

Smalls  
Manhattan  
5/5 6:00 & 7:30 p.m.