

## IN PRINT



**Der KühnFaktor. Frei + Unabhangig: No Limits im Jazz**  
**Joachim Kuhn, Michael Bruning (Alfred Music)**  
 by Anna Steegmann

In *Der KühnFaktor. Frei + Unabhangig: No Limits im Jazz* (*The Kühn Factor. Free and Independent: No Limits in Jazz*), legendary jazz pianist Joachim Kuhn delivers a memoir that mirrors musical improvisation. Non-linear in structure, the narrative progresses through episodic flashbacks, digressions and leaps of thought. Co-authored with Michael Bruning and released on the occasion of Kuhn's 80th birthday, the volume serves as both a primary source for the history of European free jazz and a candid self-portrait of an artist who has remained remarkably consistent in his defiance of genre. If there is one word that defines Joachim Kuhn, it is restlessness.

Born in the East German city of Leipzig in 1944 to a father who was a circus acrobat and a Jewish mother who gave birth in secret during one of the frequent, often incendiary, Allied bombing raids, Kuhn's early life was marked by the political repression of the German Democratic Republic (GDR) under the yoke of the Soviet Bloc, as well as a self-imposed, rigorous discipline of ten-hour daily practice sessions. Influenced by his older brother, acclaimed clarinetist Rolf Kuhn (1929-2022), he fell in love with jazz at an early age. He formed a trio in 1964 and is credited with introducing free jazz, then considered "American, imperialist music," in the GDR. Readers get a fascinating look at the high stakes of avant garde expression behind the Iron Curtain. His subsequent defection via Vienna in 1966 was a pivotal moment, allowing him to join his brother and launch an international career.

Kuhn portrays his evolution as a musician with an eye toward the role luck has played in his journey. He has performed across Europe, the US, Asia and Australia, never losing his uncompromising approach to improvisation. Whether playing in duos, trios, quintets or as a sideman, he has collaborated with legendary American musicians such as Ornette Coleman, Don Cherry, Slide Hampton, Jimmy Garrison and Archie Shepp, as well as fellow Europeans Karl Berger, Albert Mangelsdorff, Aldo Romano, Michel Portal, John Surman, Martial Solal, brother Rolf and many others. He documents his turn to electronic keyboards, his signature "Diminished Augmented System," and his entry into the West Coast fusion scene. The book includes a comprehensive index, a rich collection of photographs and images of paintings by Kuhn and drummer, painter Daniel Humair who originally inspired the pianist to additionally become a visual artist. Tributes from 60 prominent musicians, producers and journalists are also included.

Currently available only in German, *Der KühnFaktor* is essential for anyone interested in learning about an uncompromising creative life. Above all, it is a wonderful tribute to a major artist who recently turned 82 and remains a powerhouse of improvisation.

For more info visit  
[alfred.com/products/der-kuhnfaktor-00-20310g](http://alfred.com/products/der-kuhnfaktor-00-20310g)



**Here Today Gone Tomorrow**  
**Paul Dunmall Quartet (RogueArt)**  
 by Marc Medwin

Certain musicians play their surroundings by enhancing collaboration. UK multi-instrumentalist Paul Dunmall (who turns 73 this month) consistently raises the temperature in any environment he creates, whether completely improvised or with his diverse compositions. This improvised quartet unites old and new Dunmall collaborators in music of invigorating freshness. *Here Today Gone Tomorrow's* three long tracks—the briefest at nearly 15 minutes—travel the improvisational spaceways Dunmall's been charting for nearly five decades. Drummer Mark Sanders' intricately rhythmic cymbal work and John Edwards' resonant bass pizzicato lay the groundwork for block chords from pianist Liam Noble, hitting the titular piece's flexible groove dead-center.

It is difficult to avoid witnessing shades of Mujician, Dunmall's quartet with Paul Rogers and the late Keith Tippett and Tony Levin, as the music's swing and facility converge and the heat increases. Immediately, interplay informs every level, especially the whimsical little phrases Dunmall and Noble bandy about, atoms of exchange creating micro-centers as the music weaves a hypnotic narrative. The sectional form inhabits realms of song, chamber music and atomistic interaction of the stereotypical Euro-free variety, especially in Edwards' jaw-dropping solo. The leader's switch from tenor to soprano, and his range on the instrument, is stunning, paving the way for a register-leaping solo from Noble; Sanders and Edwards slide in and out of time, as has always been their wont.

It is impossible to document in any meaningful way the various configurations into which the quartet clusters and fragments as structure morphs into form. Moments need to suffice, like the sudden and nearly humorous ending of the titular piece, or the slowly evolving moonbeam harmonies Noble conjures to begin "Speaking Silence", from which Edwards' arco emerges only to fade toward rasping obscurity. Can there be anything more beautiful than Dunmall's quietly glowing soprano as it opens "Light" amidst cymbal shimmer? Even to describe his playing is futile. He conforms to no school, and while he is a master of melody, the harmonies he implies are just as rich.

Dunmall and his quartet ride waves of tradition while never succumbing to them, and as like the album's title—all ends too quickly.

For more info visit [roguart.com/artist/paul-dunmall/266](http://roguart.com/artist/paul-dunmall/266)



**Classics Reimagined: Impromptu 2**  
**The Good Old Days**  
**Ted Rosenthal Trio (TMR Music)**  
 by Ken Dryden

Pianist Ted Rosenthal has consistently proven himself during his long career as a pianist, bandleader, composer and arranger, in addition to his valuable

work on recordings by the likes of Gerry Mulligan, Jim Hall, Ken Peplowski, Randy Sandke and Jay Leonhart, among many others. His ambitious series *Trio in 4 Acts*, recorded in the summer of 2024, features his two trios with special guests.

The third volume in the series, *Classics Reimagined: Impromptu 2*, features his inspired arrangements of classical works, joined by Noriko Ueda (bass) and either Quincy Davis or Tim Horner (drums). Like many jazz musicians, Rosenthal has an extensive classical background and composed an opera using the text of letters written to his father by his paternal grandmother ("Dear Erich"), before she and Rosenthal's grandfather perished in the Holocaust. The pianist gives Chopin's "Waltz In C-Sharp minor" a hip samba treatment, featuring each trio member in turn. Clarinetist Ken Peplowski (1959-2026) is added for Modest Mussorgsky's "The Old Castle" (composed for the suite *Pictures at an Exhibition*). Rosenthal sticks close to the melody for the first chorus before transforming the piece into a swinging waltz, with Peplowski matching the leader's improvising skill. Violinist Sara Caswell is added for Sergei Rachmaninoff's "Vocalise" in an emotional duet with Rosenthal that conveys a sense of sorrow. Ueda and Davis join them for English Late Romantic composer Sir Edward Elgar's neglected gem "Salut D'Amour" and French Impressionist/iconoclast Erik Satie's "Je Te Veux", both of which prove fruitful for Rosenthal's quartet as they explore these timeless melodies with a modern touch.

The fourth volume of the trio series is *The Good Old Days*, featuring both of Rosenthal's working trios, with Martin Wind or Ueda (bass) and Horner or Davis (drums), in different pairings, plus Peplowski on two tracks. The pianist's bop chops are on full display with the first trio in his strident setting of "From This Moment On" (Cole Porter), while his playful setting of "Two Sleepy People" (Hoagy Carmichael) brings to mind Fats Waller's recording, minus the vocal. Rosenthal shows off his ragtime skills in his lively interpretation of Scott Joplin's timeless "Maple Street Rag", backed by Horner's light percussive touches. The full trio is on hand for a swinging, sentimental rendition of "Autumn in New York" (Vernon Duke) and Ueda and Davis join the leader for another lively swinger, the title track, a piece that has the flavor of Duke Ellington without being imitative. The virtuoso skill of the late clarinetist Peplowski, across a wide variety of styles from early jazz to modern day, is well known, and his swinging tone is a highlight on two Rosenthal compositions: "Hot Sauce" (inspired by Louis Armstrong's early hit recording "Struttin' With Some Barbecue") and the engaging calypso of "Sunny Side Up", which finds him with Rosenthal engaging in some memorable call and response, backed by the potent rhythm team of Ueda and Horner.

For more info visit [tedrosenthal.com](http://tedrosenthal.com). Rosenthal is at Mezzrow May 8-9. He also plays *The Side Door* (Old Lyme, CT) May 1 and *Jazz Forum* (Tarrytown, NY) May 22-23. See *Calendar and 100 Miles Out*.



**Circle The Heart**  
**Marty Ehrlich/Julius Hemphill (Relative Pitch)**  
 by John Sharpe

Woodwinds virtuoso Marty Ehrlich vividly remembers this 1982 concert from Worcester, MA, but he only