



Breathing in the Walls
Tiger Hatchery (ESP-Disk')
by Phil Freeman

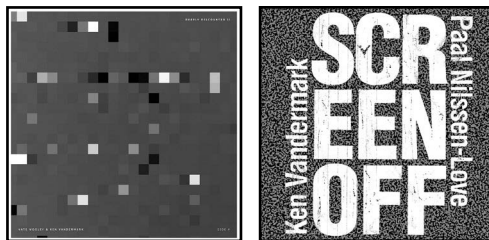
Tiger Hatchery is a Chicago-based free jazz trio of saxophonist Mike Forbes, bassist Andrew Scott Young and drummer Ben Billington. *Breathing in the Walls* is their second album for ESP-Disk, following 2013's *Sun Worship*. (They've also released a string of hard-to-find cassettes, CD-Rs and limited-edition LPs, including a live collaboration with fire-breathing New England saxophonist Paul Flaherty.) *Sun Worship* offered three tracks in 31:17 and *Breathing in the Walls* is even more of a punk-rock blast, its nine tracks flying by in just 30:09.

The trio's music draws a lot of its power from its willingness to embrace noise-rock, another form for which the Midwest is well known, as fervently as free jazz. Young plays a loud, heavily distorted electric bass, his meaty roar forcing Forbes to battle him for dominance of the sonic field, as Billington clatters and splashes around his kit, surrounding the two men with waves of Rashied Ali-style temporal disruption.

Sun Worship's three tracks ran 7, nearly 9 and more than 15 minutes, respectively. *Breathing in the Walls* is generally much more concise; the longest piece, "Drawing Down The Moon", lasts a mere 5:39 and the shortest, "Pothole Pleasure", sprints past in a breathtaking 1:07. It's a heavier album than its predecessor too, mixed for maximum physical impact. Bass is even more distorted and aggressive than before, very much in the spirit of Marino Pliakas' work with Peter Brötzmann's group Full Blast. Drums are louder as well. On the aptly titled "Not Chill", Billington explodes from the first note, thundering across the kit like a herd of wild horses trampling the landscape into frothy mud as saxophone shrieks and gibbers and bass rumbles and throbs.

The album has more than one mood though. The title track is essayed twice, to end each side of the LP. Each version is atmospheric, even haunted. Drones and mechanical sound effects appear in the background and Young limits himself to rumbling, almost subsonic drones, as Billington scrapes and taps his kit and Forbes plays squiggling, murmuring figures that only occasionally erupt into wrathful outbursts.

For more information, visit espdisk.com



Deeply Discounted II/Sequences of Snow
Nate Wooley/Ken Vandermark (Audiographic)
Screen Off
Ken Vandermark/Paal Nilssen-Love (PNL)
by John Sharpe

Chicago-based reed player Ken Vandermark remains one of the most productive and consistently adventurous artists on the scene. In a full-on schedule he continues to develop new projects and partnerships spanning myriad styles, from free jazz and punk to noise and contemporary classical and all points in between, allowing the realization of an ever more rounded portrait. However he also still finds mileage in existing alliances like the two represented here, which are among his most exuberant, although both are realized in ways that are a departure from previous practice.

On *Deeply Discounted II/Sequences of Snow*, Vandermark joins forces with trumpeter Nate Wooley for their third outing since 2015. Released in LP and download format, the album is a sidelong piece by each rather than the sequences of shorter pieces that have characterized their earlier efforts. Bravura interplay prevails no matter the author, but notwithstanding the pyrotechnics there's a surprising amount of melodic material in evidence too.

Wooley's "Deeply Discounted II" comprises seven discrete episodes, separated by between 10 and 20 seconds of near silence. A sprightly trilling fanfare appears in the second section, which later recurs first as an explicitly stated motif and then as something hinted at but never fully restated towards the close. As both get chances to stretch out, Vandermark takes a turn in the spotlight on baritone saxophone, combining plosive pops, screeches, exhalations, whistles and snuffles in the sort of timbral display of which the trumpeter would be proud.

On Vandermark's "Sequences of Snow", dedicated to experimental filmmaker Michael Snow, even though the structure of the continuous 15-minute track is less discernible, there is a clear sense of composerly direction as it unfolds, made clear through occasional recurrent elements, such as the corkscrewing unison towards the close. Wooley gets to show his chops again, notably where Vandermark belays a repeated figure and the trumpeter comes on like an exploding steam engine, if such a thing could also purr, growl and slobber. Both sides of this excellent disc demonstrate what a fertile partnership this is.

Of greater vintage is Vandermark's duo with powerhouse Norwegian drummer Paal Nilssen-Love. *Screen Off* is the tenth offering from the pair. It's a retrospective, but with a twist. In the bandcamp notes to the release there is again reference to Michael Snow and the Structural Film movement he initiated and the album boasts an intriguing concept. Purposefully disruptive, it contains 21 two-minute extracts from YouTube footage of the duo drawn from the last ten years of its existence, selected by Vandermark and Nilssen-Love in collaboration with producer Lasse Marhaug. But sound only. The screen is off. The cuts were then assembled together not in a chronological manner, but rather what made sense musically, often jumping back and forth years in the process.

Obviously the fidelity varies tremendously from almost normal quality to tinny and murky. To soften the jump from one event to another, Marhaug has inserted electronic linking sounds to enable the segue. But while the fast-cut technique could work with film, the disc serves to confirm that the mind's ear works

differently to the mind's eye. Although undeniably capturing the excitement and impact of the duo in snatches, the overall episodic effect is less than compelling. Shorn of context the extracts offer stark exercises in contrast, but that's not enough to offset the lack of opportunity to appreciate the trajectory and drama of the long-form improvisations at which this twosome excel. For Vandermark completists only. For newbies, the good news is that there are nine other places to start.

For more information, visit audiographicrecords.com and paalnilssen-love.com. Vandermark is at 244 Rehearsal Studios Aug. 30th. See Calendar.

ON SCREEN



Ashram: The Spiritual Community of Alice Coltrane Turiyasangitananda
by Phil Freeman

After releasing a string of highly regarded albums between 1968-73, Alice Coltrane left Impulse for Warner Bros. She was already drifting away from the secular music world though. The three studio albums and double live disc to follow were unmistakably transitional records; each one was a little more spiritually inclined than the one before. By the end of her career as a 'jazz' musician, she was singing in Sanskrit and performing interpretations of Indian songs from the Vedic spiritual tradition.

Coltrane moved from Long Island to Malibu, California, where she established the Vedantic Center and changed her name to Turiyasangitananda. In 1983, the Shanti Anantam Ashram opened its doors. Coltrane was the swamini, or spiritual leader, and led weekly services. The music she recorded during the '80s-90s was entirely devotional in nature, but not at all traditional; she set lyrics honoring her Vedic spiritual beliefs to hard-driving gospel organ with layers of percussion, ashram members chanting along with her in a call-and-response manner that was thrilling to hear, no matter what one's religious beliefs—or lack thereof.

Alice Coltrane Turiyasangitananda died in 2007 (she would have turned 82 this month), but the center stayed open until it was destroyed in the California wildfires of November 2018. Before that, filmmakers Vincent Moon and Priscilla Telmon were permitted to film a Sunday service, the results depicted in *Ashram*.

This is not a traditional music documentary. The viewer is simply immersed in the beautiful Agoura landscape and taken inside the ashram. Men on one side, women on the other, the devotees sit and kneel on the floor and clap and chant along as Surya Botofasina plays keyboards and sings one of Coltrane's songs. During the film's half-hour running time, two songs are performed and Botofasina, Coltrane's sister Marilyn McLeod and two ashram members, Purushottama Hickson and Uma E. Pierson, make statements about their beliefs, heard as voice-overs. *Ashram* is an immersive experience and the music is powerful indeed, but those expecting to learn something about Alice Coltrane's beliefs and practices will be disappointed.

For more information, visit fourthree.boilerroom.tv

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PARK - 6:30pm
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