

REISSUES

ICTUS RECORDS 30TH ANNIVERSARY COLLECTION:

1) STEVE LACY/ANDREA CENTAZZO, CLANGS, ICTUS 121.

The Owl / Tracks / Dome / The New Moon / Torments / Ducks. 40:05. Lacy, ss, bird calls, pocket synth; Centazzo, perc, d set, vcls. Udine, Italy, Feb. 20, 1976.

2) DEREK BAILEY/ANDREA CENTAZZO, DROPS, ICTUS 122.

Drop One / Recapitulation, Reiteration and Rabbits / How Long Has This Been Going On? / Drop Two / Tutti Cantabile / Drop Three / Drop Four / Sing, Sing, Sing / Jim Never Seems to Send Me Pretty Flowers. 39:01.

Bailey, el, g, ac g; Centazzo, perc. Moruzzo, Italy, April 3-4, 1977.

3) STEVE LACY/ANDREA CENTAZZO/ KENT CARTER, IN CONCERT, ICTUS 123.

Bone (Tao) / The Way (Tao 2) / Stalks / Existence (Tao 1) / The Crust / Feline / Ducks. 67:12.

Lacy, ss, synth; Centazzo, d, perc; Carter, b. Udine, Italy, Dec. 5, 1976.

4) ALVIN CURRAN/EVAN PARKER/ ANDREA CENTAZZO, IN REAL TIME, ICTUS 124.

In Real Time #1 / In Real Time #2 / In Real Time #3 / In Real Time #4 / In Real Time #5 / In Real Time #6. 59:22.

Curran, synth, p, tpt; Parker, ss, ts; Centazzo, perc, perc synth. Rome, Italy, Dec. 12-13, 1977.

5) ROVA SAXOPHONE QUARTET/ ANDREA CENTAZZO, THE BAY, ICTUS 125.

Trobarclus / Ce Biel Cisciel Da Udin / The Bay / Carmel Duet / Ready N. 2. / Ready N. 6 / Ready N. 1 / Ready N. 3. 47:11.

Ochs, ts, ss; Raskin, bari s, as, ss, cl; Ackley, cl, ss; Voigt, as, ss, flt; Centazzo, perc. Carmel Highlands, CA, Dec. 1978.

6) VARIOUS ARTISTS, THE NEW US CONCERTS, ICTUS 126.

Trio West #1 (a) / Trio West #2 (a) / Live in Woodstock (b) / NY Tapes #1 (c) / No Wall (d) / Mc Clung #1 (e, d) / Mc Clung #2 (e, f) / NY Tapes #2 (g) / Electric Duo (g) / West Duo (g) 66:19.

Andrea Centazzo, perc. (all tracks); John Carter, cl (a); Vinny Golia, rds (a); Tom Cora, cel (b); Toshinori Kondo, tpt (c); Jack Wright, as (d); Ladonna Smith, vln, vla, voice (e); Davey Williams, el gtrs (f, g), banjo (f); Eugene Chadbourne, gtrs (g); Gregg Goodman, p (g). New York, November 7, 1978 (c) (g); Tooscalusa, AL, November 17, 1978 (g); Jackson MS, November 19, 1978 (e); Berkeley, CA, December 10, 1978 (g); Los Angeles, CA, July 16, 1979 (a); Woodstock, NY, December 1980 (b, g); Bologna, Italy, April 1986 (d).

7) POLLY BRADFIELD/ ANDREA CENTAZZO/ EUGENE CHADBOURNE/TOM CORA/ TOSHINORI KONDO/JOHN ZORN. THE NY TAPES, ICTUS 127.

First Environment for Sextet / NY Duo #1 / Second Environment for Sextet / NY Duo #2 / NY Sextet Improvisations / NY Trio. 58:32. Bradfield, vln; Centazzo, perc.; Chadbourne, gtrs; Cora, cel; Kondo, tpt; Zorn, rds. New York City, NY, November 7, 1978.

8) A.C. MITTELEUROPA ORCHESTRA, DOCTOR FAUSTUS, ICTUS 128.

*Musticascema< / Third Environment for Orchestra< / Chirimia< / First Environment< / Lost in the Mist> / Mittelmarch% / Doctor Faustus** 73:59.

Enrico Rava, tpt; Franz Koglmann, fgh, tpt; Gianluigi Trovesi, b cl, as; Carlos Zingaro, vln; Theo Jorgesmann, cl*; Radu Malfatti, tbn %; Albert Mangelsdorff, tbn*; Carlo Actis Dato, b cl, bari s*; Roberto Ottaviano, ss; Sauro D'Angelo, cl, as; Andrea Anzola, Fr hn; Roberto Manuzzi, ss; Roberto Bartoli, b; Stefano Ferri, b; Franco Feruglio, b%; Bruno Cabassi, xyl, perc; Gianpaolo Salbego, perc; Guido Vianello, perc*; Paolo Zanella, perc*; Andrea Centazzo, d, perc, cond. Bologna, Italy, December 11, 1980<; Modena, Italy, July 8, 1981>; Alassio, Italy, July 5, 1982%; Ravenna, Italy, June 12, 1983*.

9) ALVIN CURRAN/GIANLUIGI TROVESI/ LOL COXHILL/ANDREA CENTAZZO, THIRTY YEARS FROM MONDAY, ICTUS 129.

A Old Man River in the Georgia of My Mind / Mantric Improvisation* / The Gypsy Part One= / The Gypsy Part Two= / The Box Session #1< / The Box Session #2< / Trovecen #1> / Trovecen #2>* 72:47.

Centazzo, perc; Curran*, p, tpt, synth; Carlos Zingaro=, vln; Coxhill<; ss; Trovesi>; b cl, pic cl, as. Udine, Italy, April 1977*; Bologna, Italy, July 1983<; Passariano, Italy, July 1983>.

10) ANTHONY COLEMAN/ MARCO CAPPELLI/DAVEY WILLIAMS/ LADONNA SMITH/ANDREA CENTAZZO, BACK TO THE FUTURE, ICTUS 130.

Back to the Future #1 / Back to the Future #2* / Back to the Future #3* / Back to the Past #1= / Back to the Past #2= / Back to the Past #3= / Back to the Past #4° / Back to the Past #5°* 64:02.

Centazzo, perc °=, digital perc*, sampling*; Coleman, p*; Cappelli, gtrs*; Williams °=, gtrs, banjo; Smith °=, vln, vocals. London, England, February 1979+, Bologna, Italy, 1980=; New York City, NY, April 2005*.

11) STEVE LACY/ANDREA CENTAZZO, TAO, ICTUS 131.

Tao 1 / Tao 2* / Tao 3* / Tao 4* / Tao 5* / Tao 6* / Tao 7= / Tao 8= / Tao 9= / Tao 10=.* 57:02.

Lacy, ss, bird calls, pocket synth; Centazzo, perc, d set, vcls. Bologna, Italy, Feb. 18, 1976*; Udine, Italy, Nov. 1984=.

12) VARIOUS ARTISTS, REBELS, TRAVELERS, AND IMPROVISERS, ICTUS 132.

*The Bregenz Session** / *Church Music #1** / *Church Music #2** / *Church Music #3** / *The Innsbruck #1=* / *The Innsbruck Session #2 / Rebels, Travelers & Improvisers. 68-21.*

John Fisher*, p; Theo Jorgensmann*, cl; Melvin Poore*, tba; Evan Parker=, ts; Martin Joseph=, el p; Eugenio Colombo=, as, flt; Andrea Centazzo, perc, electronics; Lol Coxhill, ss; Franz Koglmann, tpt, flgh; Lester Bowie, tpt; Alvin Curran, p, synth; Giancarlo Schiaffini, tbn; Evan Parker, ts; Tony Oxley, perc. Bregenz, Austria, July 1983*; Pistoia, Italy, July 1977; Innsbruck, Austria, January 1983; Modena, Italy, June 1978.

Most of the individual CDs comprising this splendid collection were originally released by Andrea Centazzo's Italian Ictus label and feature the talented performer in a variety of groups, with a collective personnel of forty-five performers who read like a Who's Who of modern free improvisation. For this boxed set, many tracks have been added to the original individual releases, and in some cases the sound has been improved and the order of tracks corrected. The Ictus label closed its doors in 1984, not to return to life again for a couple of decades. As a result, much of the music included in this box was recorded in the late 1970s, even though the recordings span the life of the label. Centazzo clearly had his favorites, so two of the CDs are duos with Steve Lacy, and another is a trio with Lacy and bassist Kent Carter. The 48-page full size booklet contains short essays by Guillaume Grisl Belhomme and Michael McCaw, commentary on the performances by Centazzo, and numerous black and white photos. This beautifully designed budget-priced luxurious limited edition collection is a welcome addition to the genre of free improvisation and one of the best releases of 2006.

(1) The set opens with *Clangs*, a duo between Centazzo and Lacy recorded at a concert in Udine, Italy in 1976 as the first LP to be released on the Ictus label. While it was later reissued on CD by the label, this version adds the compelling "Ducks." According to Centazzo, the order of the tracks has been altered to be "closer" to that of the original concert. Centazzo and Lacy had prepared well for this outstanding performance, with Lacy's soprano showing a more aggressive atonal side than the polished approach he perfected later in his career. His fascinating bird calls add a stunning and sometimes humorous perspective, while Centazzo understandably plays the role of color commentator, usually (as on "Tracks") performing with the subtle strokes of a visual artist, only occasionally bursting forth aggressively. At times, such as on "Dome," Lacy's repetitions might appear to the uninitiated as self-parody, but in truth they are the product of a highly disciplined, subtle altering of notes, leading naturally to the following cut, the openly expansive "The New Moon," which is likely to surprise those unfamiliar with Lacy's attractively aggressive side. While the recording time, even with

the "bonus" track, is still just over forty minutes, the disk packs a potent punch of concentrated, distilled sound, with each of the six tracks striking a compelling statement. Considering how many sessions Steve Lacy has led in his celebrated career, it is difficult to single out any—including this one—as critical. *Clangs* is an outstanding recording, both for Lacy's superb playing and in part because of the presence of Centazzo, who while a seemingly minor presence, was an inspiring influence for the soprano saxophonist.

(2) *Drops* is vintage Derek Bailey from the late 1970s: unfettered, uncompromising free-form improvisation void of melodic content, a concept from which the guitarist never wavered. Bailey always gives the impression that his musings begin with a *tabula rasa*, a blank slate in which anything goes, leading to abstractions of often great brilliance and energy. This album is a straight reissue (with digital re-mastering and editing) of earlier releases of the same material on Ictus Records on both LP and CD, resulting in only thirty-nine minutes of recording time. Nonetheless, as with most of the disks in this boxed set, the quality of musicianship is superb, and one-half a CD of concentrated, classic Bailey is worth more, any day, than most full length albums. Andrea Centazzo performs in duo on every track, and he varies between an almost cloudlike backup role and in-your-face aggressive thrusts that seem to relish Bailey's beckoning hooks. "Drop Three" is a good example of the latter, with Bailey's overtly percussive approach being met hand-in-hand by hard-core contributions from Centazzo. Bailey's unusual electric guitar does not sound like any other, appearing almost like amplified steel drums on "Sing, Sing, Sing, Sing." Overall, few of these tracks are easy to listen to, which is not different than most Derek Bailey albums. Perhaps the most fully realized track is the closer, "Jim Never Seems to Send Me Pretty Flowers," a sentiment that describes the music about as well as anything. Bailey swooshes forth with oddball sounds and Centazzo keeps pace. Overall the results are typically brilliant Bailey: utterly compelling and largely indecipherable, an example of Derek Bailey and Andrea Centazzo at their best.

(3) That Centazzo has an affinity for the playing of Steve Lacy is evidenced by the prevalence of his presence. *In Concert* was recorded live in Udine, Italy almost ten months after *Clangs* was recorded, adding Kent Carter's rich full voice on acoustic string bass to the duo of Lacy and Centazzo. The results on *In Concert* are equally strong, even as the presence of Carter dramatically alters the sound from essentially one of Lacy in solo performance interacting with the percussionist to one of a fully formed trio. The bassist's stunning sound on "The Way (Tao 2)" masks a mysterious, luxuriating solo. As a whole, the album has the unmistakable stamp of Steve Lacy's best works, the melodies bearing his clear imprint. The instant digitally re-mastered recording restores the original order of the tunes, and at least as importantly, returns the previously lost "Stalks" and "Feline" to their rightful place as part of the concert, the former of which, in particu-

lar, is a stunner. While the entire album has the glow of the restrained, concentrated thrill of Lacy's modest focused approach that he would eventually perfect, Lacy often veers in unexpected directions, with "Stalks," as a prime example, retaining that raw, radical persona that Lacy displayed on *Clangs*. The longest piece on the album, "Stalks" features the trio at the height of its powers, with the soprano saxophonist's creative sparks clearly inspired. Centazzo plays a secondary, though important, supportive role on the album. 1976 was a special year for Lacy, when he recorded his classic *Trickles* album with Roswell Rudd. Though of lesser import, *In Concert* is an important contribution to Lacy's massive body of work.

(4) As is the case with Steve Lacy, Evan Parker's early work can be very different than his performances years later. He is the dominant voice on the trio with Andreas Centazzo and Alvin Curran on *In Real Time*, which combines tracks from three nights of live recordings from December 1977, and which tracks were previously released in part on LP, and expanded to two CDs on the ICTUS label. This reissue adds one track, "In Real Time #6," but does not appear to include all the tracks previously released. Nonetheless, the results are often fascinating due to the unusual mix of synthesizer, saxophones, and percussion, performed in multiple roles, with Parker playing both tenor and soprano saxes; Curran taking up his usual synthesizer and performing brilliantly on piano particularly on the fourth and sixth tracks, and on trumpet; and Centazzo adding "percussion synthesizer" to his arsenal. Photos of the group in performance have the look of a Sun Ra façade, with so many different instruments present. While there is a somewhat static quality to some of the music, such as parts of "#4," there are continual moments worth noting throughout—but this disk takes more concentrated listening than most of the others. "#5" is particularly difficult listening, as Parker hangs in the upper register for extended periods, joined by grating synthesizer. Halfway through, he comes down to earth, his tenor taking a more somber role. Centazzo generally shows a confident side, fully comfortable in his role as a full partner. "#6" is by far the most exciting track on the disk: Parker performs with the ecstatic punctuated bravado that has since become his calling card, while Curran pounds away on piano, and Centazzo engineers what is an exciting end to the disk.

(5) ROVA was a young and refreshing group (as opposed to the more experienced and refreshing group it is now) when the studio recording called *The Bay* was made in Carmel Highlands, California in late 1978. Originally released on LP and co-produced by Andrea Centazzo and Henry Kaiser, the instant reissue is a digitally re-mastered version of the CD released as part of the ICTUS Reissue Series. At the time of this recording, ROVA was Larry Ochs, Jon Raskin, Bruce Ackley, and Andrew Voigt, and the saxophone quartet has remained remarkably true to its original vision, retaining most of the same personnel after thirty years of performances—an astounding accomplishment particularly

given the non-commercial nature of the music. Over time, ROVA became identified with radical interactions with other instrumentalists, and the engagement with Centazzo was one of its early successes, epitomized by the short but fascinating Italian folk theme, "O Ce Biel Cisciel Da Udin," and the melodic interlude on "Ready N.6," each of which ROVA performs with uncharacteristic humor. Centazzo's hand is everywhere, as he takes composer credit for most tracks, though the saxophone quartet's free-form style and distinct sound is recognizable by anyone familiar with the group, which appears here in various combinations from solo to quintet. One of the best pieces is "Carmel Duet" in which Centazzo goes head-to-head with considerable skill with one of the saxophonists. "Ready N. 2" is another winner as two of the saxes go at it with incredible intensity, and Centazzo fits in seamlessly. Unfortunately, soloists are not identified, but that is a minor quibble as this wonderful, though short, disc is one of the strongest in the entire set.

(6) *The New US Concerts* may be an example of the concept of "Less is More," or "Good Editing Makes Better Recordings." The legacy of the album is a bit confusing. According to Centazzo, it includes some of the tracks from the previously released *USA Concerts West* and *USA Concerts East*, adding some previously unreleased tracks. This recording adds four tracks to the CD entitled *USA Concerts*, although curiously, the flap covering the instant CD mislabels it as "The US Concerts," rather than its correct title, "The New US Concerts," causing further confusion. *The New US Concerts* collects various performances of Centazzo mostly from the late-1970s with a variety of extraordinarily talented players. The album surges from the start with the unusual trio of John Carter, Vinny Golia, and Centazzo, and while it may be difficult to differentiate the reeds without a scorecard, there is some exciting blowing all around. "Live in Woodstock" offers a glimpse at the late Tom Cora in an intimate surrounding, while trumpeter Toshinori Konda offers powerful gushes of sound on "NY Tapes #1." "No Wall," featuring the duo with Jack Wright, is another highlight, as the saxophonist goes head-to-head with Centazzo in a battle of wits. Curiously, the duo was recorded in Italy, while every other track was made in the USA. There are a couple of cuts featuring the fine voice and violin of the generally under-exposed LaDonna Smith, and these are filled with fascinating moments as she stretches and squawks in fine form, while Centazzo replies in kind ferociously on "MC Clung #1," on which guitarist Davey Williams adds a third voice. Centazzo puts in a stellar performance on "NY Tapes #2," while his partner, Eugene Chadbourne, passionately embraces the moment. The same instrumentation recorded ten days later for "Electric Duo," electrified this time with Davey Williams on guitar. MC Clung #2" introduces the spasmodic piano playing of the Cecil Taylor-influenced Greg Goodman, whose enormous potential is evident, but whose legacy faded to obscurity in later years. Andrea Centazzo clearly had an ear for talent, and he identified some of the best and the brightest

American improvisers with whom to collaborate. Despite many great moments, though, there is a sense of the whole not quite equaling the parts, and ultimately the CD comes across as a sort of sampler, a hodgepodge whose common denominator is Andrea Centazzo.

(7) Recorded live at New York radio station WXXR in 1978 following a US tour, this spectacular session is released here for the first time in a complete and accurate version, correcting deficiencies from previous releases on LP and CD (entitled *Environment For Sextet*). In his liner notes, Centazzo calls this "...some decisive pages for improvised music of that decade"—and it was. While it may be difficult to select the "best" CD from the ICTUS boxed set, and any selection is at least in part a matter of personal taste, *The NY Tapes* is my personal favorite, for several reasons. As with the other tracks, the personnel is extraordinary, but somehow there is a special camaraderie present in the studio that ignites, and makes what might be a tedious cacophony among lesser players an entertaining cacophony. The two horns, John Zorn and Toshinori Kondo, who have since developed a longstanding musical bond, are stunning; the three strings, guitarist Eugene Chadbourne, cellist Tom Cora, and particularly violinist Polly Bradfield are at times thrilling, with little-known Bradfield the biggest surprise; and Andrea Centazzo is clearly buoyed to one of his finest performances. There is humor, constantly changing sound, superb improvisation, and an uncanny understanding among the players. The results are good, old-fashioned fun: mostly abstract, but tinged with bird calls, scratches, plunges, wisps—in short, the sounds of surprise that anticipated those of an ADD-drenched video generation short on attention but high on innovation. With an aggregate recording time of nearly forty minutes, the two "Environment for Sextet" sessions comprise most of the album, but the lesser, remaining four short tracks are still worthwhile. As a whole, there is a continuity throughout that connects each of the pieces in a tapestry of wildly fluid eclecticism.

(8) Andrea Centazzo's big band album, *Doctor Faustus*, is solid evidence of the Italian leader's penchant for attracting and discovering superior talent. It is difficult to say that Centazzo anticipated the longstanding tenure of Italy's most acclaimed free-style improvisational orchestra, the Italian Instabile Orchestra, but there is no denying his status as a visionary. The present conglomeration was called the Andrea Centazzo Mitteleuropa Orchestra, and although it was mostly comprised of a talented core of Italians, it did, in truth, attract musicians from several countries. In addition to Centazzo, the heart of the band is Enrico Rava on trumpet, Franz Koglmann on flugelhorn, Gianluigi Trovesi on bass clarinet and alto sax, Carlos Zingaro on violin, and a sax section that included Carlo Actis Dato and Roberto Ottaviano. The first four tracks come from a live concert in Bologna, Italy in 1980, and were previously released on the ICTUS label on LP and CD as *Andrea Centazzo*

Mitteleuropa Live. "Lost in the Mist" uses the same personnel at the Open Air Festival in Modena, Italy in 1981, while the short "Mittelmarch" comes from a festival in Allasio from 1982 and includes Radu Malfatti on trombone. The title piece, "Doctor Faustus," was recorded live in Ravenna, Italy in 1982, and adds Carlos Actis Dato and Theo Jorgensmann, and features Albert Mangelsdorff both a *cappella* and backed by Centazzo. Highlights abound, although it is not always easy to identify the many soloists, which include a thrilling soaring effort by Zingaro on the opener; an enticing conversation on "Chirimea" between Rava and Koglmann; and a brilliant contribution by Dato on "Third Environment for Orchestra." Centazzo's hand is everywhere, as his composing sets the stage for the improvisations. While impressive, his writing is generally less detailed than that of others—such as Barry Guy, Alexander Schlippenbach, Giancarlo Schiaffini, or even Georgio Gaslini—who have written extensively for similar large orchestras. Centazzo's role is largely to set down a canvas to let his players loose, which lends itself to the feel of a small band.

(9) *Thirty Years From Monday* brings together two live duo tracks each from four largely unrelated concerts, the unifying presence of Andrea Centazzo being the common denominator. "A Old River in the Georgia of My Mind" and "Mantric Improvisation" come from a 1977 event that was intended by Centazzo as fodder for his new ICTUS label. Unfortunately, the concert didn't record well, but the musical results are superb, with fascinating, at times thrilling, contributions by Alvin Curran. On "River," he performs in superb fashion in an unusual role (for him) as a Jazz performer, replete with an interlude of Old Time Religion, while on the lengthy, Reichian-infused second piece, he appears in his more familiar guise as an electronic sound sculptor, leading the charge with a closing irreverent computer-distorted trumpet. Centazzo never misses a beat, his classical background a big plus, as he plunges head first into a sea of hypnotic sound. The last six cuts were recorded in 1983, and are simply pure joy, with Carlos Zingaro swirling abstractly on violin on "The Gypsy Part One," and building in geometric style on "Part Two." Centazzo stays for the ride as though he were part of a chase scene in a movie. Following Centazzo's early lead, Coxhill maintains a high level of intensity on soprano on both "Box Sessions," shooting forth rapid-fire linear lines. Both players roar on the second of the "Box Sessions," and midway through, the percussionist virtually overwhelms Coxhill at times, while the saxophonist gives his due at the end. Centazzo's collaboration with landsman Gianluigi Trovesi shows a more aggressive side to the talented reed player on "Trovencen #1," spurred by Centazzo's rising volume. "#2" has a more pensive air, supported by an Eastern tinge that nonetheless manages to build to a crescendo, thanks in large part to Centazzo's prodding.

(10) Once again, Centazzo collects multiple and distinct sessions for the recording he calls

Back to the Future, which is released here for the first time. The first three tracks are a special treat, presenting an unusual trio with which the percussionist made a sort of "comeback" in 2005. Performing at the New York City club, Tonic, Centazzo sparkles in the company of pianist Anthony Coleman and young Italian guitarist Marc Cappelli, who collectively present a fully realized artistic vision of integrated abstract improvisation. The three appear as equal partners, with Coleman issuing a call to arms with unique off-kilter non-swinging thrusts on "Back to the Future #2," incorporating a style that marks his unique voice. Cappelli and Centazzo are particularly effective on "Back to the Future #3," with the guitarist confidently smashing aside preconceived stereotypes and Centazzo hitting hard at his side. The second session, which includes the first three of the "Back to the Past" tracks, features the percussionist with Davey Williams and LaDonna Smith in a studio recording from Italy in 1980, while the last two "Back to the Past" tracks feature the same group more than a year earlier in a concert from London. "Back to the Past #1" concentrates on little sounds, probably not as fully developed as the "Future" tracks, with Smith and Williams focusing on what may seem to the uninitiated as mostly scratches, if fascinating ones. "Back to the Past #2" and "Back to the Past #3" expand the sound palette, with an almost Zornian eclecticism fueled by the strings, with some particularly remarkable displays by Davey Williams. The last two "Back to the Future" tracks, while impressive, are somewhat less convincing, with LaDonna Smith spreading her vocal chords on "Back to the Past #4" in an elastic style evoking Cathy Berberian. The finale, "Back to the Past #5," explores colors and moods, with occasional outbursts, and is a fine ending to a diverse album.

(11) Steve Lacy's immediately recognizable sound and deceptively simple melodies are in evidence on these ten previously unreleased cuts in which the saxophonist is joined by Andrea Centazzo. Centazzo writes that *Tao* is "...one of the best duet[s] ever recorded on ICTUS." It is solid Lacy, with Centazzo's role largely limited, particularly on the first six studio-recorded tracks from 1984. The last four improvisations, from a concert in Italy in 1976, are much looser, with the last two highlights of the album, with Centazzo taking a stronger role and Lacy mixing bird calls and pocket synthesizer. Compared to most of (1) and (3), and compared to the concert tracks of *Tao*, the first six studio tracks sport a conservative and unremarkable sound (at least for Lacy), highly controlled and focused and typical of Lacy's later style. Effectively, there are two separate albums on *Tao*, the first with the Lacy sound that has become so common in light of his innumerable recordings from the period, the other a more radical, wilder display. As a whole, the recording has the feel of a solo improvisation, as Centazzo's presence subordinate.

(12) The compilation contained on *Rebels, Travelers & Improvisers* includes three pieces

recorded in 1977 and three in 1983, and includes four distinct small groups representing some of the finest players of the era. Some of the music matches the extraordinary expectations, while there are some less than fulfilling moments. You have to appreciate the humor inherent in the combination of clarinet and tuba, joined by piano and percussion, on the opening "The Breghez Session"—though the piece is anything but humorous. The now little-known John Fisher is superb on piano, where he has the chance to improvise at length, his fingers flying off the keys. Melvin Poore blows some fine multi-phonics, sounding like a trombone, Theo Jorgesmann shows his Jazzier side, and Centazzo is more aggressive than usual, clearly inspired by Fisher. The three "Church Music" tracks feature some fairly typical, though always good, Evan Parker on tenor, with Centazzo especially confident and impressive. Martin Joseph's electric piano explores timbre on "#1," but not unexpectedly sounds somewhat dated. One of the most interesting moments on the CD is on "#1," where Centazzo lays down a spacy undercurrent and Parker and Eugenio Colombo wrestle on top, building in intensity, but "#1" ends precipitously and disappointingly. "#2" offers strikingly extended collective solos from the saxes. The "Innsbruck Session" tracks are noteworthy for the opportunity to hear Franz Koglmann and Lol Coxhill together, with the trumpeter/flugelhornist sporting a more overtly emotional charge than usual. Again, expectations run high for the final title track, with a "front line" of trumpeter Lester Bowie, Evan Parker, and trombonist Giancarlo Schiaffini, and a dream rhythm section of percussionists Centazzo and Tony Oxley, plus Alvin Curran on piano and synthesizers. Alas, although the running time is more than fifteen minutes, the trombonist seems barely present, Bowie's contributions are ordinary at best, Parker dominates with singular charm, and Centazzo expresses a distinct sound. Despite some successes and attractive moments, the verdict: a missed opportunity.

As a whole, the *ICTUS Records' 30th Anniversary Collection* is a fascinating compilation with hours of special moments. It is an important, if not essential collection, featuring an incredible array of talent, and priced as an extraordinary value. Reflecting the tastes and performances of Italian percussionist Andrea Centazzo, the 12-CD boxed set gloriously presents an eclectic and highly individual selection of free improvisation.

Steven Loewy

TRIO-X:

1 part Duval - 1 part Rosen

1 part McPhee

Add oxygen. Stand back.