

Krzysztof Penderecki & Don Cherry – Actions (2001)

Written by bluesever

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1 Hums - The Life Exploring Force (18:57) 2 Sita Rama Encores (4:30) 3 Actions For Free Jazz Orchestra (16:31) Krzysztof Penderecki - Conductor Han Bennink - Percussion, Drums, Tabla, Piano (Thumb), Wood Block Peter Brötzmann - Sax (Bass), Sax (Tenor) Gunter Hampel - Flute, Clarinet (Bass) Albert Mangelsdorff - Trombone Terje Rypdal - Guitar Kenny Wheeler - Trumpet, Cornet Willem Breuker - Clarinet, Sax (Tenor) Gerd Dudek - Sax (Soprano), Sax (Tenor) Manfred Schoof - Trumpet, Cornet Tomasz Stanko - Trumpet, Cornet Peter Warren - Bass, E-Bow Fred Van Hove - Organ, Piano Mocqui Cherry - Tamboura Buschi Niebergall - Bass Joachim Berendt - Producer, Liner Notes Dieter Wegner - Remastering Sanna Nybold - Design Don Cherry & Ed Blackwell - Flute, Arranger, Vocals, Adaptation, Pocket Trumpet, Wood Flute.

This recording documents a live performance at the Donaueschingen Music Festival in 1971, but the co-crediting is somewhat misleading. While the New Eternal Rhythm Orchestra (named for Cherry's magnificent album from a few years prior, *Eternal Rhythm*) appears throughout, the first two pieces are by Cherry, the last by Penderecki. The two "principals" don't actually come into contact with each other. The orchestra is truly an all-star cast of the cream of European improvisers, each and every one having gone on to significant achievements. Cherry's "*Humus - The Life Exploring Force*" is a suite not too dissimilar to those he performed on both *Eternal Rhythm* and the ensuing *Relativity Suite* (including an early version of "*Desireless*"), ranging from raga-inspired lines to bluesy refrains, to jaunty modal riffs. If the performance is a little on the ragged side and if vocalist Loes Macgillycutty proves somewhat overbearing, it more than makes up for it in enthusiasm and joy. This is followed by a brief encore in which Cherry gets the audience to sing along on a complex (for Westerners) Indian scale; it's quite enchanting before exploding into a short, orchestral free-for-all. Penderecki's "*Actions for Free Jazz Orchestra*" is another kettle of fish entirely. The composer had often used jazz elements in his previous works, though always sublimated to his overall classical (if avant-garde) direction. Here, he makes a good attempt to meet this "foreign" genre halfway, allowing the orchestra much latitude for improvisation while supplying dark and brooding borders to keep things corralled. The problem is, that's basically all there is to the piece: alternating written parts (fine in and of themselves) and free improv (also energetically performed) with little to conceptually

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bind them. It's not a bad performance by any means, and is of some degree of historical import if only to document a relatively rare meeting of the jazz and classical avant-garde, but it doesn't quite hold together as a solid work. Fans of Cherry, though, will definitely want to own this disc as a significant addition to his stellar work of the late '60s and early '70s. ---Brian Olewnick, Rovi

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