



DYNAMICS OF THE IMPROMPTU

- 1. **IMPROMPTU DYNAMICS 1** (9.10)
Recorded on 12.11.73
- 2. **IMPROMPTU DYNAMICS 2** (16.22)
Recorded on 18.12.73
- 3. **IMPROMPTU DYNAMICS 3** (8.05)
Recorded on 18.12.73
- 4. **IMPROMPTU DYNAMICS 4** (14.42)
Recorded on 17.1.74
- 5. **IMPROMPTU DYNAMICS 5** (9.51)
Recorded on 17.1.74
- 6. **IMPROMPTU DYNAMICS 6** (12.33)
Recorded on 17.1.74

Total playing time: 71.04

Derek Bailey
(Acoustic & Electric stereo Guitars)

Trevor Watts
(Soprano sax)

John Stevens
(Drums & Cornet)

Recorded "live" by Martin Davidson at the Little Theatre Club,
Garrick Yard, St Martins Lane, London in 1973/74.
Re-mastered for FMR by Trevor Watts at ARC Studios, Hastings. U.K.
Cover Painting by Ruth Franklin
Painting photographed by Shawn Vinson of Vinson Art
Design & Layout: Ewan Rigg
Produced for FMR by Trevor Taylor



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by
Steve Day
(Avant Magazine)

The winter of 1973/74 was as bitter as they bloody well come. I can still remember it like one great sharp cold icicle around my brain. In those days I did not make it up to London very often. It's true, I was aware of what was going on in Garrick Yard at the Little Theatre Club. In the 70's Melody Maker still covered left field projects in truth I never went to the Little Theatre Club, and in truth, if even half the people who say they went, went, the place would have regularly been full. It wasn't. The legend that has become the Spontaneous Music Ensemble in their home base off St. Martins Lane is the stuff of dedicated recording (both in terms of written text and musical tape) by a relatively small band of cognoscenti. Martin Davidson should get a mention in this context, not just because he has done so much to promote this music through his own Emanem label, but also because he was there in the first place and had the forethought to tape what was going on.

"Dynamics of the Impromptu" is a good place to start investigating mid-period SME. Although Entropy do not use the title "Spontaneous Music Ensemble", in fact that is what this recording is about; Mr Watts and Mr Stevens were operating SME as a duo at

the time, but the Ensemble always had a bit of a revolving door in terms of membership, and Mr Bailey was certainly someone who regularly walked his way in. The sound on "Dynamics of the Impromptu" may not be absolutely digital mint but, it is almost gold star quality, with decent separation between the three protagonists. If what is happening here can't be heard, it won't be heard anywhere. This is hard music made in hard times by musicians who were themselves hard up and getting harder. Anyone in the least bit interested in the development of improv in England and its wider frame of reference within the 'jazz' community needs to hear what John Stevens, Trevor Watts and Derek Bailey were doing at the Little Theatre Club. By 74 this particular scene had already been in operation for eight years. What we get on this CD is the recorded evidence of a cauldron of experimentation that had been on the boil for some time. Both John Stevens and Trevor Watts had already formed independent bands ("Away" and "Amalgam" respectively) which were acting to a broader brief than that of SME. The effect on the continuing improv studies was to create a densely integrated music that constantly operated on a microtonal tryst. A click of sticks. The soprano sax played so the notes splay out

like an aural fan. Derek Bailey's electric guitar still fitting tone and volume together as one slash of colour, selected out into stubborn little ringing pieces. This the sound of a secret place. Here is an opportunity to share it.

Earlier this year I went to hear Trevor Watts' Moire Music Quartet down at Dartington. A fine gig with everyone on the case; fusing a rush of rhythms and improvisation inside a set of written pieces which were crying out to be recorded. Okay, so the Moire Music rational is a long way from the "Dynamics of the Impromptu" (25 years if anyone is counting) but, in the end, it is just not possible to compartmentalise a life. Somewhere in the joyous hoolahoop of Moire Music is the same soprano saxophone that is investigating a total impromptu musical enquiry. It may not be obvious; it needs a little effort to hear it. Why bother with a two decade old set of total improvisations? If we don't hear history, how do we know whether the present is not merely a reinvention of the past? The only reason to keep continuing to add up the same sum, is that something is going to be done with it. This Derek Bailey, John Stevens, Trevor Watts session is some serious multiplication. Don't re-invent the wheel, ride it.

