

M E D W A Y B L U E S



EVAN PARKER SAXOPHONE
JOHN EDWARDS DOUBLE BASS
TONY MARSH DRUMS



I first played with Tony Marsh in a trio with John Edwards at the club which Christine Tobin ran at the Tufnell Park Tavern. Thereafter, most of the gigs we did were at The Vortex and usually the same trio with John on bass.

I think the tenor/bass/drums instrumentation is to jazz and improvised music what the string quartet is in written music. The weight and phrasing shift around between registers from the kick drum and the low E on the bass and the low Ab on the tenor up through the registers to the high harmonics from reed and string to the shimmering overtone patterns on the ride cymbal.

Listening to Tony's melodic drumming and John's percussive bass shows the way the roles can shift around in a listening band.

This approach gets called "free improvisation", John Stevens and I called it "open" playing back when we started playing that way. No set list.

For me it has come to mean you can start anywhere and go anywhere. With John and Tony sometimes I would play a Monk tune or I would quote a chunk of Coltrane. Free to, not free from.

Having played for so many years with Alex von S. I have got used to the idea of a set visiting the house that Monk built.

Tony's appetite for playing and interacting was strong. Playing this way can never be just "making the gig". Like a stool with three legs, in a trio there is stability only as long as each leg supports the others. Maybe there is an analogy where the music flies but I can't think of one. Time flies anyway.

Other recordings may show up from the Vortex, but every time we played there the music and the understanding were getting better. We all think we are going to live for ever...

Thanks to Colin Erswell of ColJazz in Chatham we did this gig out of town. Thanks to Trevor Taylor one set was recorded.

Tony has been gone for a while now. We were blessed by the time he spent with us.

Evan Parker

