

# The Boomerang

New reissues and archive releases

## Albert Ayler

**Revelations: The Complete ORTF 1970 Fondation Maeght Recordings**

Elemental Music 4×CD/5×LP

In July 1970, Albert Ayler played his last recorded concerts at the Fondation Maeght in France. Parts of these appeared on *Nuits De La Fondation Maeght* (1971) and *Live On The Riviera* (2005), but *Revelations* is the first complete document of the shows, giving a much clearer picture of where Ayler was at in his final months, as he draws on gospel, marches and folk themes while developing material from his Impulse! albums.

All too often the subject of sexist dismissal – her features were largely excised from *Nuits* – Mary Maria Parks is a revelation here, extending her vocals into free territory, and going head to head with her partner on soprano saxophone. Sourced from Radio France tapes, the sound quality is a marked improvement on the previous releases. The rhythm section of pianist Call Cobbs, bassist Steve Tintweiss and drummer Allen Blairman comes through with far more clarity and punch, doing justice to their contributions.

Due to travel complications, Cobbs did not make the first concert on 25 July. As Tintweiss recalls in an interview included in the boxset's lavish booklet, "it turned out to be much more freeform without the piano". This was the young bassist's first time playing with Ayler, and from the opening "Music Is The Healing Force Of The Universe" he goes all in, supporting the saxophonist's clarion statements and Parks's poetry with gutsy tremolo bowing. A little goofy on record, Aquarian pop stomper "Heart Love" is a delight, benefitting from Ayler's tender melodicism and Parks's confident vocals. Most exciting of all are the previously unheard improvisations "Revelations 1–6". On the second of these, Parks launches into an extended soprano solo, working over ragged phrases and guttural honks while Ayler joins her on high-pitched bagpipes.

The 27 July date has a more stately, spiritual quality, with Cobbs draping diaphanous gospel figures around a gorgeously affirmative "Truth Is Marching In". The pianist's relatively straightforward style doesn't always fit with Tintweiss and Blairman's free mania, but Ayler's beseeching altissimo squall pulls it all together. As the concert progresses, the rhythm section finds greater unity, falling into a swinging vamp on "Revelations 5" and showing remarkable sensitivity on "Spiritual Reunion". Ayler is magnificent throughout, the spiritual intensity of his playing overwhelming at times. *Revelations* is less a final testament than

the sound of Ayler gathering everything he knows and pushing into the sublime. Stewart Smith

## Julius Eastman

**Stay On It/The Holy Presence Of Joan D'Arc**

Week-End LP

Two exquisite and wildly contrasting archival recordings of Julius Eastman's works *Stay On It* and *The Holy Presence Of Joan D'Arc*, pressed on vinyl in a limited edition run of 500 copies. Recorded in concert at SUNY Buffalo on 16 December 1973, *Stay On It* was performed by avant garde ensemble Creative Associates, conducted by Eastman.

Though the piece is minimalist in its approach, it clearly embraces a dynamic melodic groove. Crossing over into pop music, the piece allows performers to improvise through various music cells, encouraging them to play and repeat ideas at their own discretion. Of course, tempting musicians to repeat and adlib themes and motifs is a risk for any composer, but in this recording it is abundantly clear that Eastman and the ensemble thrive as they coalesce, like a spinning top in perfect motion.

Written for ten cellos, *The Holy Presence Of Joan D'Arc* is one of Eastman's later works. The piece was conducted by the composer and recorded at the Third Street Music Settlement, New York City, in 1981. In contrast to the pop energy of its companion, *Joan D'Arc* flows through several dark timbres. The ensemble of cellists saw and jeté from a single, thundering motif into a lavish, dissonant polyphony. In Eastman's own words, the work serves as "a reminder to those who think that they can destroy liberators by acts of treachery, malice, and murder. They forget that the mind has memory." Eastman's arrangement blushes slowly, as a returning monophonic riff gently diffuses through the ten cellos. The music sighs into a resplendent and sensual solo, before a cascade of falling sequences plunge the ensemble deep into a harrowing and brazen recapitulation.

Eastman's music was tragically overlooked in his own lifetime. While his music will continue to be transcribed and performed, pressing archival recordings in this way preserves the composer's original vision. These recordings represent the fullest manifestation of Eastman's luminous presence.

Mariam Rezaei

## First Six Records

Various

Dischord 7×7"

More than 40 years ago when Washington, DC teenage punk rockers Ian MacKaye

and Jeff Nelson decided to start their label Dischord to release a record by their recently disbanded high school band The Teen Idles, the objective was to document their brief existence and prove punk was not just a phenomenon exclusive to the bigger cities in America.

As more young bands began to form in the area and MacKaye and Nelson embarked on their next musical venture Minor Threat, DC became a focal point for the burgeoning US hardcore punk scene, and Dischord chronicled the local happenings. Today, it is considered the benchmark for independent record labels worldwide, as it still maintains a roster of hometown bands and operates under the same DIY standards as it did in its beginnings. As its title implies, the *First Six Records* box set contains the initial releases that launched the label and would eventually become highly coveted collector's items.

With The Teen Idles' *Minor Disturbance* EP, it was evident Dischord was learning as they went along. Tales of Nelson and MacKaye handcutting the covers with scissors and gluing them to replicate the UK punk singles they collected are well known, and the musicianship is an exhilarating, openly defiant roar with the low rumble of MacKaye's bass sounding like a dragging muffler. Equally as rough, and inspiring was the label's second release, State Of Alert's *No Policy* EP, featuring a young Henry Rollins on vocals.

By the time MacKaye and Nelson released Minor Threat's debut EP in the summer of 1981, they had smoothed out the edges of their previous unit to present a band that could play loud, hard and fast without corroding into a blurry clamour. With their *In My Eyes* EP released at the end of the year, they further streamlined their precise sound while upping the bloodyminded rage.

An even keel of temperance and fury can also be found on the label's fourth release, Government Issue's *Legless Bull* EP, with the stellar guitar work of Tom Lyle and blinding drumming of Mark Alberstadt. Closing out the busy year of 1981 for the upstart label was the *Possible* EP by the shortlived Youth Brigade. Fronted by former Teen Idles vocalist Nathan Strejcek, they held to the jagged qualities of Strejcek's previous band but weren't afraid to get slow and sludgy a la Black Flag on their anti-religion tirade "No Song". Also thrown into the box are never before heard practice recordings by the pre-Teen Idles unit The Slinkees, whose basement punk shenanigans are far from earth-shattering, but provide some context to the label's rich history.

Tony Rettman

## Funkadelic

**Maggot Brain**

Westbound 2×LP

The opening of Funkadelic's 1971 opus *Maggot Brain* feels like a message delivered from the other side. Amid the wet, echoed-out sound of an amp being plugged in or turned on, Parliament-Funkadelic frontman George Clinton enters the fold, giving us a peek at what he has discovered about the unknowable: "Mother Earth is pregnant for the third time/For y'all have knocked her up/I have tasted the maggots in the mind of the universe/I was not offended/For I knew I had to rise above it all/Or drown in my own shit".

*Maggot Brain* takes us on a journey through life, death and into the furthest reaches of ecstasy and madness. Much has been written about the self-titled opener and Clinton prompting guitarist Eddie Hazel by asking him to imagine that his mother had died while he played; 50 years later, the nearly ten minute epic is still a harrowing trip. Hazel searches, wails and mourns through his guitar, digging out an explosive, electrified blues for the psychedelic age. "Can You Get To That" takes the album on a complete 180 degree pivot in tone. With its slick, bopping groove and classic doo-wop vocal arrangement, the song feels bright and optimistic – even though its lyrics warn that even in death, we can't escape paying life's karmic debts. "Hit It And Quit It" is a flamboyant acid rock jam whose tricky, shifting metre is a reflection of the band's subtle virtuosity.

"You And Your Folks, Me And My Folks" and "Back In Our Minds" use bouncy, midtempo grooves as the basis for earnest calls for unity and love that fully indulge in the glowing ideals of the utopian 60s. Packaged with two additional versions of the title track – one recorded live in 1971, the other remixed by BMG for 2017's *Reworked By Detroiters* project – this reissue reminds us of the power of Funkadelic as a band and the splendour of their finest and most bizarre work of art. John Morrison

## Fred Lane with Ron 'Pate's Debonairs

**From The One That Cut You**

Goner LP

## Fred Lane & His Hittite Hot Shots

**Car Radio Jerome**

Goner LP

Reissue of two key LPs from the underground scene birthed in Tuscaloosa, Alabama at the tail end of the 1960s. Tuscaloosa was a football crazed college town, but it also drew musicians like Davey Williams, LaDonna Smith, Anne LeBaron and others. Two of the scene's main instigators were artists who also did