

NEW ISSUES

**GARY LUCAS &
PHILLIP JOHNSTON
FAST 'N' BULBOUS:
WAXED OOP (AN
IMPETUOUS STREAM
BUBBLED UP)**

CUNEIFORM RUNE 277

*SURE NUFF 'N' YES I DO / TRUST
US / SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTE
BLUES / DROPOUT BOOGIE /
YOU KNOW YOU'RE A YOUNG
MAN / WELL / ICE ROSE / CLICK
CLACK - ICE CREAM FOR CROW /
WOE-IS-US-ME-BOP / THE BLIMP
/ THE PAST SURE IS TENSE /
BLABBER 'N' SMOKE / ^CHINA
PIG. 52:22*

Lucas, el g, National Steel g;
Johnston, as; Jesse Krakow, b;
Richard Dworkin, d;
Rob Henke, tpt; Joe Fiedler, tbn;
Dave Sewelson, bari s;
^Robyn Hitchcock, vcl.
No date listed, NYC, NY.

**1) NATE WOOLEY
- FRED LONBERG-HOLM
- JASON ROEBKE
THROW DOWN YOUR
HAMMER AND SING**

PORTER 4022

*TACONEWS ALTOS / SANS
ALUMINUMIUS / SOUTHERN
ENDS OF THE EARTH / SAINT
MARY / ANYWHERE, ANYPLACE
AT ALL. 60:03.*

Wooley, tpt; Lonberg-Holm,

For listeners of a certain age, Captain Beefheart records were one gateway into the world of Free Jazz and Improvisation. Of course, Beefheart has been MIA as a musician since 1982, so it has been up to his intrepid band members like John “Drumbo” French and Gary Lucas to keep his musical legacy going. Lucas teamed up with Phillip Johnston, a long-time fan of Beefheart’s music, back in 2004 to form Fast ‘N’ Bulbous, a tribute band with a twist. No one can come close to capturing Beefheart’s gravely vocal acrobatics, so why try? Instead they dove in to the repertory and arranged the music for a take that goes from Delta Blues to brass band shuffle (5/05, pg. 25). This is the second outing by Lucas, Johnston, and crew and they bring the same wry, wacked-out take on a broad swath of Beefheart’s music. The defining sounds of the session is the pairing of Johnston’s skewed second line horn charts with Lucas’ skirling guitar. The alto, bari, trumpet, trombone combo is tightly arranged with themes that strut along, careening off into wild counterpoint. Fiedler’s trombone playing and Sewelson’s bari are particularly charged. Krakow’s bass and Dworkin’s drums have a barely contained rock energy even as they chop time into odd subdivisions of groove. Lucas shreds across it all, playing with a gleeful intensity, whether on National Steel guitar or gnarled electric lines. Only “China Pig” features vocals, and Robyn Hitchcock does his best to measure up to Beefheart’s yapping drawl. This is all played with a sense of fun, with no shred of reverence or repertory stiffness; an effective tribute to Mr. Van Vliet.

Michael Rosenstein

Freely improvised music is certainly one of the most difficult arenas to appreciate, with its demands on both listener and performer to create magic out of unmapped territories with varying contexts, from energized or quiet terrains to everything lying in the middle of unpredictability. Despite the fact that many outings feature exceptional musicians, such without-a-net meetings often prove only mildly successful or enjoyable (for repeat listening) with the balance being within the “once is enough” realm.

(1) presents the trio of trumpeter Nate Wooley, cellist Fred Lonberg-Holm, and bassist Jason Roebke for this one-off collaboration in Chicago during the fall of 2007. On this texturally-focused, five-track outing, each player digs deep within each instrument’s sound-making abilities. Wooley’s bleats and smears meet Roebke’s long-bowed artifacts while Lonberg-Holm’s electronically-manip-