

John McCowen (contrabass and Bb clarinets, and alto and bass recorders) and Sam Ospovat (drum set, chromatic Thai nipple gongs, vibraphone, concert chimes).

The title track begins with unaccompanied recorder intoning a stark Asian-sounding melody, but the sudden addition of rapid accompaniment from cello and banjo suggests a Renaissance theme as well. This start shifts suddenly to clipped modernist dissonance as Seabrook switches to electric guitar. Hughes' wandering free improvisation is accompanied by a rapid-fire jangle of percussion and basses. The foreground turns to spacious and varied percussion; a passage of near silence is followed by a drum kit solo. Eventually, after further shifting textures, there's a brief recourse to solo recorder, then a rapid guitar lead.

This pattern of sudden shifts in orchestration, style and mood characterizes both individual pieces and movement through the suite. High-speed guitar and pitched percussion suddenly pause for a long tone from contrabass clarinet. The collective and individual performances are meticulous and inspired. Seabrook's composerly imagination, stretching a Frank Zappa impulse, is consistently surprising, whether it's a passage combining bowed low-register basses and contrabass clarinet ("I Wanna Be Chlorophylled I—Corpus Conductor") or passages of horror, comedy and insane laughter ("Gutbucket Asylum"). Each piece has surprises, whether it's the delicate percussion and spacey electronics of "From Lucid to Ludicrous" or the grand guignol operatic vocalizing and semi-hypnotic repose of the concluding "Compassion Montage".

brutalovechamp is playful, witty, sometimes just silly and often beautiful (though not for long). Like all of Seabrook's projects, it's worth hearing and it benefits from brilliant execution from all concerned.

For more info visit pyroclasticrecords.com. Seabrook is at Public Records May 20. See Calendar



Mourning of the Praying Mantis / Worms with Strings
Eugene Chadbourne (Feeding Tube)
by Kurt Gottschalk

The Insect and Western records of the '90s and beyond remain some of the most unusual in Eugene Chadbourne's odd and extensive catalog. They were an extension of the Derek Bailey-inspired guitar and banjo extended technique heard at some point on most Chadbourne records, but were something more than that. Coming from a musician who can own both Johnny Paycheck or Erik Satie, the series was still a surprise. They are among his most difficult records to listen to, and at the same time contain some of the most unabashed beauty among his instrumental compositions. Chadbourne, it seemed, was imagining the lives of bugs and other such creepy crawlies with respect and sincerity, even affection, and without anthropomorphism. He imagined a sonic world where bugs had busy days, and maybe fell in some sort of love, but still a world where all of the actions seemed minuscule to the human ear.

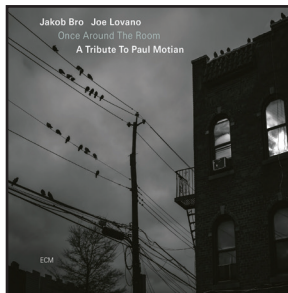
It's another surprise that Feeding Tube has committed to a series of reconfigured Insect and Western reissues, commencing with *Mourning of the*

Praying Mantis / Worms with Strings, and on vinyl no less (digital downloads are also available). It wouldn't seem the sort of thing a label that wants to make money might do, but the arrival of the first installment is nonetheless an occasion to celebrate.

Mourning of the Praying Mantis (originally from the 1998 album *Insect Attractor*) and 1999's *Worms with Strings* have been pared down and paired together for this inaugural issue. The original 19-minute "Mantis", with 18 players, has been recut to add bits of a separate, previously released duet with Warren Smith. The wide-ranging ensemble remains, from Misha Feigen's balalaika to Tom Heasley's tuba—and the adventurous players realize the scene wonderfully.

Worms with Strings gets chopped down to about a third the length of the CD release, but having the two recordings back-to-back works so nicely that it hardly matters. This selection again features an array of musicians, with different performances spliced together, sometimes quite audibly so. While slinky strings might seem the worm's domain, they are more plucked than bowed here, and skitter about in unexpected ways, with Leslie Ross' bassoon standing out. For completists wishing for the whole of the program, remember that worms cut in half can regrow themselves.

For more info visit feedingtuberecords.com



Once Around the Room: A Tribute to Paul Motian
Jakob Bro/Joe Lovano (ECM)
by Tom Greenland

Jazz is an art that often takes one step backwards to move forward two, using old traditions to generate new expressions. *Once Around the Room: A Tribute to Paul Motian* is a case in point: co-led by American tenor saxophonist Joe Lovano and Danish guitarist Jakob Bro, the project draws on the protean music of Motian's long-running trio with Lovano and guitarist Bill Frisell to create something contemporary and *sui generis*. However, there are three bassists this time: Larry Grenadier and Thomas Morgan on acoustic, mixed to either side, and Anders Christensen on softly plucked electric, mixed center; instead of Motian's less-is-more ethos, two drummers (Joey Baron and Jorge Rossy), soft yet garrulous, sit on the thrones. Bro, who played on Motian's 2006 *Garden of Eden* (also on ECM), fills the Frisell-ian function of sound-scaping (as opposed to comping or soloing); his multidimensional textures, created with loops, delays, whammy, sustain, harmonizer and ring modulator—all of which can sound uncannily 'acoustic'—serve as the ideal musical doppelgänger for Lovano's smoldering tenor.

Recorded exactly ten years after Motian's death, the album opens with "As It Should Be", a droning twelve-tone composition with leaping intervals. "Sound Creation" is a group improvisation based on a motif by Lovano, who switches midway through to tárogató (Hungary's version of a wooden soprano saxophone); the track achieves a beautiful blend of acoustic and electric textures. Lovano's "For the Love of Paul" is a longer track whose theme is based on wide, crab-walking intervals (recalling Thelonious Monk's "Misterioso"); the performance boasts some magnificent tenor work. Bro's "Song

to an Old Friend" and "Pause" both have folksy Americana themes, the former showcasing Lovano's operatic tone, the latter Bro's brilliant multi-layered accompaniment. Between them is Motian's "Drum Music", which he often used as a set closer. Here it's set up by Bro's growly modal musings, which spur Lovano to a charged response, spitting out lines that spew like molten lava down the volcano side—one of the album's high points. Altogether, this is a tribute that, rather than retreading the past, steps into the present and future.

For more info visit ecmrecords.com. This project is at Village Vanguard May 23-28. See Calendar.

UNEARTHED GEM



The Bootleg Series, Vol. 7: That's What Happened 1982-1985
Miles Davis (Columbia-Legacy)
by Scott Yanow

Because of the huge number of accomplishments throughout Miles Davis' career (May marks his 97th birthday), it is easy to overlook the trumpeter's work of the '80s. During his final period, his groove-oriented music became more melodic and open to pop tunes than it had been in the '70s; he was no longer using electronics to distort his tone and the ensembles were sparser. But other than *Tutu*, his albums from his later period tended to be underrated. Consisting of previously unissued performances from 1982-85, this 3-CD set documents his final years with Columbia before he moved over to Warner Bros. Ironically, many of these unheard performances are superior to others released at the time.

Here is a trivia question. Who is the only sideman of Davis' bands of the '40s and '50s to record in the studio with him in the '80s? The answer might be a surprise: trombonist J.J. Johnson. Twenty years after Johnson made his last recording with the trumpeter (on *Quiet Nights*), Johnson reappears playing a duet with Davis (heard on keyboards) on "Minor Ninths", and with the trumpeter's sextet on "Celestial Blues". The remainder of the first two discs consists of outtakes, unedited jams and discarded performances that feature Miles in the studio sounding in fine form with such sidemen as saxophonists Bill Evans or Bob Berg and guitarists Mike Stern, John McLaughlin or John Scofield.

The third disc is special, a concert performance from July 7, 1983, with Evans (heard at his best on tenor), Scofield, Darryl Jones (electric bass), Al Foster (drums) and Mino Cinelu (percussion). "Speak", "Star People", "It Gets Better" and "Star on Cicely" are among the better selections, along with "Jean-Pierre". While the leader is the main star, his band had developed its own identity, offering funky accompaniment and grooves along with some heated solos, giving the trumpeter just what he wanted at that time.

The Bootleg Series Vol. 7 is one of the more valuable releases in this series and shows that Davis' 1980s music deserves another listen.

For more info visit legacyrecordings.com