

What the press has said about:

JASON ADASIEWICZ

ROLLDOWN

482 MUSIC

2008

Lineup: **Jason Adasiewicz** (vibraphone), **Josh Berman** (cornet), **Jason Roebke** (bass), **Frank Rosaly** (drums),
Aram Shelton (alto saxophone)

"The sons of the sons of sons of the Chicago sound are expanding an ever mushrooming jazz scene. Please thank whatever god(s) to whom you voice your appreciation for these gifts of new music.

... This quintet can be described as the 21st century's version of 1960s new thing or what would Ornette do with an Eric Dolphy and a vibraphone.

The quintet's very accessible and attractive sound opens with "Good Looking Android," a sort of marching track...that wanders into the late altoist Jackie McLean's backyard. Adasiewicz's composition keeps openness as central theme, but a seemingly invisible hand guides the affair. Likewise "Gather," a more somber, chamber-like composition, wanders an introspective route exercising a reflective quality on a teetering balance of free and composed music.

Berman and Shelton's interplay is also a highlight of the session. They combine as counterpoint to the vibraphone and rhythm section ... The attractiveness of this music is...Adasiewicz boldly placing Rosaly and Roebke so far forward in the mix. Acting more than time and rhythm keepers, they prod the frontline players constantly. This total commitment to a group sound makes Rolldown a special band and album, and Adasiewicz a revelation as a new jazz composer." - **Mark Corroto, *All About Jazz***, May 20, 2008, www.allaboutjazz.com

"Vibraphonist Jason Adasiewicz is emerging as one of the most interesting bandleaders and composers in modern creative improvised jazz. ... For Rolldown...Adasiewicz has assembled a quintet of astounding musical proportion and depth, playing his tricky music that seems to have no limits of imagination, wit or wisdom. ... Collectively the ensemble is quite fond of changing up tempos at will, evidenced by the stop-start, decaying and no-time bluesy swing centered "Small Potatoes," and the easier, then ramped up, bouncy and head nodding "Creep." The band is munching on some strange blue fruit during "Good Looking Android" establishing clarion calls, staggered phrasings, spatial and brittle melody lines with direct and indirect swing. ... Adasiewicz is a fine player, in the backdrop overall, and more pronounced as an emerging writer. He's scratching the surface, and offering great potential on this fine effort that comes recommended to those who choose to listen closely."

- **Michael G. Nastos, *All Music Guide***, 2008

"...Adasiewicz plays biting, angular phrases and feeds riffs for the soloists to bounce off, among them bluesy cornet player Josh Berman and fine, hustling alto saxophonist and clarinetist Aram Shelton..."

- **Selwyn Harris, *Jazzwise***

"Former indie rock drummer turned jazz vibraphonist, Jason Adasiewicz has slowly but surely made his mark on the vibrant Chicago jazz scene. ...

Rolldown features some of Chicago's most outstanding young improvisers... Navigating Adasiewicz's jagged themes, Aram Shelton's acerbic alto and supple clarinet trades thorny lines with Josh Berman's brazen cornet, forming an expressive front line. Bassist Jason Roebke and drummer Frank Rosaly, long standing rhythm section partners, are scene regulars with an intuitive rapport, able to lend structural stability to the most abstract of grooves.

An adherent of the four-mallet style pioneered by Gary Burton, Adasiewicz is a quicksilver performer whose knotty phrases cascade with ricocheting intensity. His writing eschews conventional chord changes and rhythmic pulses, preferring improvised harmonies and elastic tempos.

"Good Looking Android," "Small Potatoes," "Creep" and "Little Screw" all invoke the atmospheric tension of Dolphy's 1964 masterpiece, complete with gnarled themes, intervallic solos and metrically abstruse rhythms. Unconventional arrangements, expansive dynamics and unpredictable shifts in rhythm prevent these tunes from settling into simulacrum of the past.

Expanding well beyond the Blue Note vibe..."Valerie" showcases Shelton's dulcet clarinet work, while "Nearby" and "Gather" both grow slowly from pensive ruminations into languorous epics. "Nearby" expands into a flurry of discordant activity reminiscent of the Art Ensemble of Chicago at their most lyrically effusive.

A promising debut, Rolldown is the 14th album in 482 Music's document Chicago series, and reveals Adasiewicz to be a new voice worthy of attention in that fertile scene."

- **Troy Collins, *All About Jazz***, 2008

"...with Rolldown, Adasiewicz makes it known that in addition to his thrilling performances with others, his own work is equally compelling."

- **Jay Collins, *Jazzgram***

"Vibraphonist Jason Adasiewicz, is one of a number of rising new vibe players of particular note... His percussive, piano-like abilities on the instrument are perceptibly clear on his aspiring debut, Rolldown, leading his working band of the same name...

While the recording draws clear influences from 1960s post-bop and free jazz patriarchs...it also displays Adasiewicz's developing musical vision. Slow angular lines move into a forward momentum on "Good Looking Android," highlighted by Shelton's angular alto sax and the striking closing vamp of Roebke's robust bass line and harmonious horns. Adasiewicz gives a clinic in vibe-swing on "Small Potatoes" and delicate sticking on the abstract ballad "Valerie," ...

Adasiewicz's compositional strength lies in his ability to weave separate threads into a woven fabric. ... These very strong musicians play to the fullest, with an intense focus that balances improvisation and composition. This is music that is heady and refined...clearly a select for progressive listeners.

To top things off, the CD contains an eight-minute...video...a really cool selection with the chance to see the quintet and Adasiewicz's scissoring mallet-work in action.”
- **Mark F Turner, *All About Jazz*, 2008**

"Vibraphonist Jason Adasiewicz has been turning heads for years in groups led by folks like Rob Mazurek and Mike Reed, and his debut as a leader makes good on that promise. Adasiewicz is clearly inspired by Eric Dolphy's *Out to Lunch*: his playing owes a debt to the spiky, ambiguous harmonies of vibist Bobby Hutcherson, and the craggy melodies he's written... are full of thrilling intervallic leaps a la Dolphy. But *Rolldown* is hardly a tribute band, and in their larger gestures, Adasiewicz's compositions don't sound much like the tunes on *Out to Lunch*. He applies a stronger hand to the music's direction - his complicated, multipartite pieces would hold up even without any soloing, and they give the players a lot to chew on when they do improvise. Generally the tunes ride on tricky grooves...”

- **Peter Margasak, *Chicago Reader* 2008**

“Chicago continues to constitute a hothouse for creative improvised music. ... Enter vibraphonist Jason Adasiewicz who has already made a malleted splash on several projects... He's among a pool of musicians previously known as sidemen...who are gradually gaining their own opportunities to record as leaders. Adasiewicz's compositions and arrangements immediately bring Blue Note-era Jackie McLean and Eric Dolphy to mind, but the sourcing...doesn't feel slavish or hackneyed. ... Adasiewicz and his colleagues absorb the basic tenets put forth on those Sixties vinyl classics and place a 21st century personal spin on them. Fanfare-style heads disperse into freer interplay and soloing on pieces such as “Good Looking Android”... Aram Shelton's dry and flinty phrasing echoes the aforementioned alto elders while Josh Berman's cornet comes from starting point of brass counterparts like Hubbard and Cherry. Bassist Jason Roebke and drummer Frank Rosaly develop just the right rapport, dividing their time between supporting solos, like Adasiewicz's cascading affair on “Small Potatoes”, and stepping up for their own assertive statements on the breaks. ... Adasiewicz's oscillating spatially-attuned sustains turn up the tension without compromising the prevailing melody-minded mood. “Creep” personifies its title, unfolding in staggered increments on another stutter-stop head before a loose string of solos, among them a stinging turn by Shelton's clarinet quite different from his earlier balladry. “Gather”...with the band's chamber side on bold display. ... Vibraphonists seeking to extend the pioneering work accomplished by doyens like Hutcherson and Dickerson are relatively few. Adasiewicz is certainly countable among that modest number and this debut will hopefully mean the first of many more albums to follow.”

- **Derek Taylor, *Bagatellen* 2008**

“...Adasiewicz makes such judicious use of the instrumental resources at his disposal to create an almost orchestral sound where almost anyone can be leading the line or performing timekeeping duties in a variety of combinations. Uniting this diversity are Adasiewicz's thoughtful compositions which allow plentiful scope for structured improvisations amid the asymmetrical themes. Testament to Adasiewicz's assertion that Berman is a key voice in his compositions are the cornetist's understated but intense soliloquies which stalk these pieces, meshing artfully with Shelton's agile alto and cool clarinet. ... Whether trading rhythmic motifs with Adasiewicz, embellishing ensembles with textural invention, or just keeping time, Rosaly displays a depth of sensitivity belying his controlled strength. Roebke's arco adds density to the ensemble unisons, while his pizzicato moves effortlessly between pulse and punditry. And if the compositional acumen wasn't enough, Adasiewicz shimmers menacingly within the rich harmonic quilt, emerging to effervescent effect, ...
...the multi-sectional pieces are packed with event and dynamic contrast.
Rolldown is a superior entry in 482 Music's ongoing documentation of the Chicago scene and, after all this time, the follow up should be eagerly awaited. ...”

- **John Sharpe, *All About Jazz*, 2008**

“Vibraphonist Jason Adasiewicz has become so ubiquitous in Chicago that it comes as a bit of a shock to realize that this is the first record to come out under his own name. ... it is a promising debut. The band sports a lineup like something that would have graced an early Bobby Hutcherson release, and a bit of an early- '60s Blue Note atmosphere curls around tracks like “Good Looking Android” and “Little Screw.”
On the Former, drummer Frank Rosaly simultaneously unpacks and reassembles the sturdy groove while the horns find highly divergent ways to sail over it and the leader rains mallets like he wants to shatter it. But on “Valerie,” Adasiewicz's chamber influences come to the fore, with lightly darting percussion and sighing bowed bass binding a melancholy clarinet melody with lines as light and steely as spider's silk. If there's a fault to this record, it's that the radiant sense of delight in its own music that this ensemble radiates onstage is muted to a steady glow.”

- **Bill Meyer, *Downbeat*, 2008**

“It is sometimes said that what separates Chicago from other music towns is a wide-open expansiveness in the music's sound... there's a feeling that the Chicago playing field is a lot more about a collective sense than individual soloists.
Rolldown is vibraphonist Jason Adasiewicz' first date as a leader. ... On the uptempo numbers there is a glassy ethereality in Adasiewicz' attack... When vibes and bass enter in bright cumulus and disappearing walks, the energy they provide takes the music into an entirely different area. “Small Potatoes” couples a bumpy walk with long tones, a tension held and expanded as Adasiewicz' glass drops pelt the taut pull of bass and percussion. “Valerie” is a poem of high harmonics and distant clatter... Jagged linearity and brushy, sparse circularity seem to be the two areas of Adasiewicz' specialty and it will be very interesting to see how they combine in years to come.”

- **Clifford Allen, *All About Jazz* 2008**

TIME OUT CHICAGO FEATURE:

“By the time Jason Adasiewicz dropped out of DePaul University’s School of Music in the late ’90s, jazz was the furthest thing from his mind. It took detours through alt-country and rock & roll and two years working on an organic farm to rekindle his passion. ...

... After playing in what he calls his high school’s “joke” jazz band, Adasiewicz got serious by enrolling at DePaul. “I really wanted to become a ‘jazz drummer in the city,’ and all that it entails. ...” Adasiewicz says. But...he began to suffer from an affliction all too common among jazz students—an acute lack of inspiration. ...

... Right after Adasiewicz left school, the alt-country band Pinetop Seven...asked the drop-out to flesh out the band’s onstage lineup. “I loved [the band],” Adasiewicz gushes. “It was just these simple, gorgeous tunes.” A studio project that had quickly become one of the most critically acclaimed representatives of the booming alt-country movement, Pinetop gave Adasiewicz the space and encouragement to experiment with new instruments, including the vibraphone. “It was part of the percussion family where you could beat the shit out of it,” he says with a laugh. “But I was also fascinated with [its] melody.”

...Adasiewicz would meet—and tour with...Edith Frost, Calexico and Manishevitz. On the side, he started working at the city’s unofficial breeding ground for jazz iconoclasts, the Jazz Record Mart. “I learned so much from that store,” he says. “I became a Lester Young freak and got into Ellington, Art Ensemble of Chicago and Sun Ra. That’s more education than college.”

After catching local jazz pioneers Vandermark 5...Adasiewicz realized that working in jazz didn’t have to mean sacrificing inspiration. Vandermark 5’s reconciliation of jazz improv with a punk ethos showed him a new path. “This isn’t the jazz I was getting upset about at DePaul. This is what I want to do.”

... After he returned from a European tour...his girlfriend (now wife) moved to Madison to pursue a Ph.D....and Adasiewicz decided to follow. Once there, he took a job that required no prior experience: working in the fields of Tomato Mountain Farm. “There were days swinging a big scythe, with the sun pounding down on you,” he says. But his absence from the scene only made him more determined in his pursuit, and he began trekking to Chicago multiple times a week to perform.

Since then, Adasiewicz formed Rolldown, moved with his wife back to Chicago and became a key player in dozens of other groups, including Rob Mazurek’s Exploding Star Orchestra and Ken Vandermark’s Double Quartet. Now his inspiration is right in front of him on stage: “I freak out every day about playing with my peers.”

The new album is both Adasiewicz’s promising first step as a leader and a powerful statement. His kaleidoscopic compositions, chock-full of references to thorny post-bop, swing easily and joyfully... Although Adasiewicz plays as a sideman more often than not, his presence is always unmistakable: Coursing with energy, he doesn’t merely tap his vibes—he attacks them, like a scythe to the vine. In hindsight, those detours look more like destiny.”

- **Matthew Lurie**, “Off The Beat Path”, **Time Out Chicago**, May 22, 2008