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**Chicago Jazz Visionaries Mike Reed and Jason Adasiewicz Perform Musical Alchemy
in *New Myth/Old Science*,
Transforming Discarded Sun Ra Rehearsal Tape Into Improvisational Gold
with their group Living By Lanterns,
An All-Star Nine-Piece Ensemble, Featuring a Mighty Cast of Young Chicago & New York Masters**

According to some versions of String Theory, ours is but one of an infinite number of universes. But you would need to dig deeply into the cosmological haystack before encountering a project as extraordinary and unlikely as *New Myth/Old Science*, which brings together an incandescent cast of Chicago and New York improvisers to explore music inspired by a previously unknown recording of **Sun Ra**. In the hands of drummer **Mike Reed** and vibraphonist **Jason Adasiewicz**, who are both invaluable and protean creative forces on Chicago's vibrant new music scene, Ra's informal musings serve as a portal for their cohesive but multi-dimensional combo, newly christened **Living By Lanterns**.

Commissioned by **Experimental Sound Studio (ESS)**, the music is one of several projects created in response to material contained in ESS's vast Sun Ra/El Saturn Audio Archive. Rather than a Sun Ra tribute, Reed and Adasiewicz have crafted a melodically rich, harmonically expansive body of themes orchestrated from fragments extracted from a rehearsal tape marked "NY 1961," featuring Ra on electric piano, **John Gilmore** on tenor sax and flute, and **Ronnie Boykins** on bass.

"The tape is clearly these ideas they're hashing out," Adasiewicz says. "Some of this stuff sounds kind of squirrely. Some is insanely beautiful. There are eight and 16-bar segments verbatim from the tape. We did a ton of transcribing, omitting phrases, adding chords. Taking this trio and expanding for 10 people, it became our personal arrangements."

The project premiered at the 2011 Chicago Jazz Festival as **Mike Reed's Myth/Science Assembly**. The far more evocative **Living By Lanterns** seems like a much more apt name for the nine-piece ensemble, which illuminates new musical possibilities in dimensions distinct from but connected to Ra's self-invented universe. What makes the album far more than a Ra spin-off is that Reed and Adasiewicz created the music for an existing band, Reed's volatile **Loose Assembly** with Adasiewicz, alto saxophonist **Greg Ward**, cellist **Tomeka Reid**, and bassist **Joshua Abrams**. They expanded the group here with Chicago electronic musician, **Nick Butcher**, and with a dazzling crew of four New York artists enmeshed by multifarious overlapping bonds: cornetist **Taylor Ho Bynum**, guitarist **Mary Halvorson**, drummer **Tomas Fujiwara**, and German-born tenor saxophonist **Ingrid Laubrock**.

"After figuring out the band, the first step in the process was to completely dismiss the idea of commenting or honoring Sun Ra," Reed says. "Neither one of us are fanatics and there's not much more anyone is going to add to the discussion of the man and the legend. The more interesting idea was of creating new music using someone's unfinished, unwanted and abandoned material."

A brief clip of Ra reciting poetry sets the scene for a cosmic journey, leading into "Think Tank," a ravishing, lapidary theme for the horns. On "2000 West Erie," the band evokes the unsettled territory between swing and bop, while "Shadow Boxer's Delight" elaborates on a "little melody that Ra played on the piano, one of several really brief cadenzas on the tape," Adasiewicz says. "Forget B" elaborates on a through-composed melody rendered in counterpoint by Boykins and Gilmore on tenor sax. And "Grow Lights," serves as a vehicle for the commanding Abrams. Listen carefully and you can hear the bass line from "Think Tank," which was extracted intact from Ra's rehearsal tape, resurface at a brisker tempo as the glue holding together "Old Science."

In some ways Reed and Adasiewicz were unlikely choices for the ESS commission. Neither of them ever saw the Arkestra perform, nor would they site Ra's music as a foundational influence. But the project draws an illuminating line between Chicago's original jazz iconoclast and two of the current scene's most consequent artists.

Over the past decade, Reed has built a democratic musical empire as a player, bandleader, director of the **Pitchfork Music Festival**, and founder of the **Emerging Improvisers Organization**, a nonprofit group that sponsors weekly jazz and improvised music performances. Born in Bielefeld, Germany, in 1974, he grew up in the Chicago suburb of Evanston, Ill. He's the rhythmic catalyst in a number of the city's most arresting ensembles, which over the years has included the **David Boykin Expanse**, **Rob Mazurek's Exploding Star Orchestra**, **My Silence**, **Suns Rooms**, and duos with **Jeff Parker** and **Mars Williams**. Reed has also shared the stage with many of his AACM mentors such as **Roscoe Mitchell**, **Wadada Leo Smith**, **Nicole Mitchell** and the late **Fred Anderson**.

[press release continued on verso]

As a bandleader, he's best known for **Mike Reed's People, Places & Things**, a capaciously inventive group devoted to unearthing and reinterpreting Chicago's forgotten hard bop anthems.

Adasiewicz (pronounced ah-da-SHEV-itiz) maintains an equally kaleidoscopic range of activities as a bandleader and a sideman. Like Reed, he's come to embody the progressive edge of Chicago's vaunted improv scene, flourishing in a wide array of contexts. He coaxes a distinctively bright, percussive sound out of the vibes with his spacious but kinetic four-mallet approach. "I'm interested in hitting the instrument as hard as I can to create these overtones that you're not supposed to create," Adasiewicz told the *Chicago Tribune*. One of his signature ensembles is **Rolldown**, a group that explores the techniques and concepts introduced by the more rigorous denizens of the New Thing movement of the 1960s, like **Andrew Hill** and **Eric Dolphy**. The Chicago quintet released the acclaimed album **Varmint** on **Cuneiform** in 2009. In addition to Loose Assembly, Adasiewicz and Reed also collaborate in the vibraphonist's minimalist free bop trio Sun Rooms, which he introduced on 2010's *Sun Rooms* (**Delmark**). He also plays with cornetist **Josh Berman and His Gang**, **Rob Mazurek's Starlicker**, **Peter Brotzmann:Adasiewicz Duo**, and **James Falzone's Klang**.

In much the same way that the careers of Adasiewicz, Reed and the other Chicagoans repeatedly intersect, Taylor Ho Bynum, Mary Halvorson and Tomas Fujiwara have been deeply implicated in each other's creative lives from the beginning. All three hale from the Boston area. Bynum and Fujiwara are childhood friends who grew up playing together, and Halvorson connected with the drummer and cornetist after college. They have all played together in numerous contexts and settings, including extensive collaborations under the leadership of composer and wind explorer **Anthony Braxton**.

Bynum, a leading force in the contemporary avant-garde jazz scene, is at the center of a vast network of artists as the leader of a celebrated sextet (with Halvorson and Fujiwara) and the chamber ensemble **SpiderMonkey Strings**. With percussionist/vocalist **Abraham Gomez-Delgado** he co-leads the avant Afro-Caribbean little big band **Positive Catastrophe**, which has released two amazing albums on Cuneiform, most recently *Dibrujo, Dibrujo, Dibrujo...* in May 2012. He is an essential member of several collective ensembles, including the **Tomas Fujiwara/Taylor Ho Bynum Duo**, the **Thirteenth Assembly** with Mary Halvorson and violist **Jessica Pavone**, and the **Convergence Quartet**. He has become an invaluable catalyst for several avant-garde patriarchs, most importantly trumpeter **Bill Dixon** and Anthony Braxton, organizing several large-scale projects for the AACM pioneer and serving as president of Braxton's **Tri-Centric Foundation**.

Halvorson is recognized as one of the most important and galvanizing new voices on guitar to emerge in the past decade, a doggedly idiosyncratic artist who "can define the character of an entire band's tonal makeup without having to scream for attention," says S. Victor Aaron. She leads a combustible trio with bassist **John Hebert** and drummer **Ches Smith**, and often collaborates with violist Jessica Pavone in a tough, sonically expansive duo.

Until recently Fujiwara's vaunted reputation as a responsive and often unpredictable trap expert has rested upon his brilliant work with Bynum (including powering Positive Catastrophe), Halvorson, **Matana Roberts**, **Red Baraat**, and baritone saxophonist **Josh Sinton's Ideal Bread**, a quartet devoted to the music of **Steve Lacy**. But he's increasingly gaining attention as an inspired bandleader with **The Hook Up**, a powerhouse quintet that released a bracing 2012 session on **482 Music**, *The Air Is Different* with Mary Halvorson.

For Mike Reed, there's something inherently amusing about assembling such a talent-laden crew to explore music that was discarded by Sun Ra. The intergalactic traveler illuminated a vast swath of space during his life, bringing form to realms where others only saw chaos. But *Living By Lanterns* isn't about illuminating past accomplishments.

"We are bringing all these people together to make their mark," Reed says. "That was the premise. With so many leaders in the group and rising stars and collaborators, everybody is trying to make their way through this life. We're working in the shadows and you have to put a light on."

For more information on Living By Lanterns, see:
www.mikereedmusic.com - www.jasonadasiewicz.com

PROMOTIONAL PHOTOS



Digital [High-Resolution] versions of these images and more are available for download on www.cuneiformrecords.com

REVIEW OF LIVING BY LANTERNS CHICAGO JAZZ FESTIVAL SHOW

"Listeners expecting Ra-inspired, wall-to-wall orchestral chaos encountered plenty of energy but something more, too: carefully scored works emphasizing Ra's history as a leader of big bands.

This music glowed with gorgeous passages for three-horn front line in tandem with cellist Tomeka Reid, plus the tintinnabulation of Jason Adasiewicz's vibes, the combustive power of two drummers, electronics and electric guitar." - Howard Reich, *Chicago Tribune*, September 2011

SOME RECENT PRESS ABOUT MIKE REED AND JASON ADASIEWICZ

"Playing all those swinging hard-bop tunes has sparked Mike Reed as a drummer. His broad beat and accents are very Chicago, a little more casual than New York pressure-cooker swing."

"As composer, Mike Reed has a knack for slow tunes that linger in the ear. On two of them, the quartet is joined by cornetist Josh Berman, who has that lag-behind-and-then-catch-up Chicago timing. Reed based the composition "House of Three Smiles" on a recorded solo by his vibraphonist buddy Jason Adasiewicz." - Kevin Whitehead, *Fresh Air* June 2012 [People, Places, and Things - *Clean on The Corner*]

"Over the last five years or so, Mr. Adasiewicz's name has kept coming up in the context of an industrious and aesthetically tamped-down crew of Chicago players: the cornetist Josh Berman, the bassists Jason Roebke and Joshua Abrams — and, on this album, the bassist Nate McBride and the drummer Mike Reed. He writes lovely tunes, the better to play through dryly. ... And he knows their dimensions. Nobody here grandstands, fusses over details, or wastes time. Solos take their place in an arrangement and then disappear. There's no problem of scale or mismatch of affect to material. It's a modest and affecting band, in control of its mood." - Ben Ratliff, *New York Times*, September 2010 [Sun Rooms *Sun Rooms*]

"If somehow you haven't already heard the vibraphone work of Chicagoan Jason Adasiewicz, chances are you will soon. For as his national reputation grows, Adasiewicz has become a kind of symbol of innovative jazz in this city, much as saxophonist Ken Vandermark was half a generation ago. Like Vandermark — an Adasiewicz hero — the vibist flourishes in far-flung bands, defying categorization. ... He can conjure rock-band energy, but he also shows the deft hand of a composer who knows exactly what he wants to occur during the timeline of a piece. When Adasiewicz is at his best, jazz, rock, pop and other sensibilities converge — or perhaps it's more accurate to say they ebb and flow, according to the demands of the tune at hand. ... "It's not so much about his playing," drummer Reed says. "He's a really interesting composer. I think the subtleties of his composing are maybe the large skill set and idea set that he has. ... a unique way of writing.

"And, in the forefront, he's very collaborative. ... He's very great about embracing what happens in the music ... If I don't like something, I'll say it. And he'll say, 'OK, I can work with that.'

"That's a great personality, and also why he has become so ubiquitous." ... Equally important, Adasiewicz clearly is taking the vibraphone to new places." - Howard Reich, *Chicago Tribune* June 2012

WHAT THE PRESS HAS SAID ABOUT ANOTHER CUNEIFORM RELEASE FEATURING JASON ADASIEWICZ

JASON ADASIEWICZ'S ROLLDOWN

VARMINT

CUNEIFORM

2009

Line-up: **Jason Adasiewicz** (vibraphone), **Josh Berman** (cornet), **Aram Shelton** (alto saxophone & clarinet),

Jason Roebke (bass), **Frank Rosaly** (drums)

"Consult the jazz vibraphone flow chart and it's easy to connect the dots between major players from Lionel Hampton to Milt Jackson up through Bobby Hutcherson. ... Chicago-based Jason Adasiewicz is a relatively new addition to the playing field...the caliber of his work so far certainly places him in a position for early consideration. *Varmint* continues the course set by his working ensemble Rolldown on their self-titled debut... Apt comparisons to Sixties Blue Note-era Hutcherson have been plentiful in press in describing both Adasiewicz's sound and his spacious composing style which embraces freer interplay without abandoning an underlying allegiance to head-solos orthodoxy for too long. A closer cousin still might be ...Walt Dickerson. Adasiewicz generates a similarly warm and luminous sonority with his mallets and makes regular use of his instrument's motor to blur his clusters into vivid watercolor shades. The rest of the group is comparably equipped on the creative front with cornetist Josh Berman and alto saxophonist Aram Shelton ... obvious antecedents for Shelton are Eric Dolphy and Jackie McLean... Berman has a full range of tonal effects... Bassist Jason Roebke and drummer Frank Rosaly work in keen collusion...The balance is particularly effective ...

... Chicago residents and visitors are fortunate... Adasiewicz and his colleagues sit well with the city's fastest company and still have plenty to say." - Derek Taylor, *Dusted*, December 2, 2009, www.dustedmagazine.com

"Vibraphonist-composer Jason Adasiewicz returns to the same avant-leaning territory he staked out on Rolldown's eponymous debut in 2008. Comparisons to Dolphy's *Out to Lunch!* are once again inevitable... There are bracing solo contributions from cornetist Josh Berman and pungent-toned alto saxophonist Aram Shelton, while bassist Jason Roebke and drummer Frank Rosaly provide lightly swinging momentum..."

- Bill Milkowski, *Jazz Times*, March 2010

"... While Adasiewicz employs his skill as a vibraphonist and composer, each member is tightly wound within the center of expression. And *Varmint*, an album that neither explodes in your face nor washes away the color, is a traditionally rooted album with quirky, unique touches. This Rolldown may just be the kind of aesthetic choice you were looking for while you pondered the latest greats from Adderley and Rollins.

The title track, alone, fully represents what Adasiewicz is capable of. His vibes dance in the background and he embraces Aram Shelton's gifted saxophone playing by featuring the sax player on both the melody and solo sections. ...each member is not only heard, but *felt* ...it's the band's overall sound that remains remarkable. ...

At times recalling the old sounds of what Blue Note recordings presented and other times, twisting notes and pitches into a literal rolldown, Adasiewicz' and Co. apply their own kindred style into the music. While Adasiewicz mostly stays back...he's the main force behind it all. ...magic comes from the melodies: two part harmonies, counter-melodies and even block chords are all finely delivered. It's one thing to have tempo and style down but to have a strong ear for melody is another feat on its own.

There's playfulness, tenderness and above all, fierce musicianship on *Varmint*. ... "I Hope She is Awake" ...ripened to the root by exceptional craft. Moments like that are hard to come by, fortunately Jason Adasiewicz's Rolldown has gathered enough of them onto one album to temper the appetite, for now." - Bryan Sanchez, *Adequacy*, March 5, 2010, www.adequacy.net

"The second recording for Jason Adasiewicz with his quintet Rolldown takes the band into a distinct modern jazz arena, sporting equal parts of straight-ahead mainstream paces alongside the bold, inventive, improvisational music of latter and current day Chicago. As a vibraphonist, he is deferring to his bandmates in the best spirit of teamwork... There's a group sound being developed, due to the sharp pitched alto saxophone of Aram

Shelton, and Josh Berman, who is making strides and progressive statements on the more traditionally identified cornet. And there's a connection to the advanced jazz players from the '60s who made equally brash statements for the Blue Note label, folks like Jackie McLean, Andrew Hill, Bobby Hutcherson, Charles Tolliver, and Sam Rivers. ... "Varmint" is the perfect representation of a...dangerous critter, rendered in a precise, prickly, yet loose melody not all that unlike something you might have heard from the Art Ensemble of Chicago in their mid-period ECM stage. ... In a driving-sideways, elusive, slippery, post-bop idea, "The Griots" punctuates and acknowledges the aforementioned Blue Note pioneers -- it's written by Andrew Hill. ... Special mention should be made of bassist Jason Roebke and drummer Frank Rosaly, who...have innate knowledge as to the flexible rhythms, organic ins/outs, and smart-set soul of how this combo operates, lives, and breathes. Considering his relatively young age ...and rapid progress as a maturing musician, **it's safe to say Jason Adasiewicz has a tiger by the tail**, though it also seems like he's wrestling with alligators, two varmints he apparently has tamed.“

- Michael G. Nastos, *All Music Guide*, www.allmusic.com

“... Between the AACM ... Clifford Jordan and Sun Ra, and the trajectory from Hal Russell to Ken Vandermark, Chicago always seems to have something bubbling up in the jazz world. Lately a group of players have started coming into their own in the wake of these precedents... Vibraphonist-composer Jason Adasiewicz has recently been very active, both as a sideman and a leader. *Varmint* (Cuneiform) is the second date under his own name... it's an updating of a particularly fractured brand of post-bop that, in the mid-Sixties, centered on Blue Note artists like Hill, Grachan Moncur III, Bobby Hutcherson, and Joe Chambers. But...this is an update with a hell of a lot of bite. ...*Varmint* is "straighter" than its predecessor (*Rolldown*; 482 Music) - delicate pulling walk from bass and drums, tidal metric upticks providing a mutable rug for Shelton's sputtering saccharine exhortations and Berman's chunky, Old Style punch. **Adasiewicz also has a tone and sense of phrasing that is unlike anyone on the instrument currently active, his sense of melody wistful and attack pelting with equal parts Milt Jackson and Khan Jamal. ... I haven't heard a modern jazz record this good in years.**”

- Clifford Allen, *Austinist*, January 6, 2010, www.austinist.com

“...what's really established him as an MVP are his subtlety, harmonic facility, and textural imagination. His recent appearances with Klang, Loose Assembly, and Joe McPhee's Topology have demonstrated how enormously he's grown as a sideman, and *Varmint* (Cuneiform), the recent second album by his quintet *Rolldown*, proves that he's evolved just as much as a leader. His compositions evoke the volatile blend of dreaminess and daring in the Blue Note recordings of Bobby Hutcherson and Andrew Hill, and they're well designed to draw out his bandmates' strengths. ...”

- Bill Meyer, *Chicago Reader*, December 10, 2009, www.chicagoreader.com

“This album...was released on Cuneiform in 2009, but sounds like it could have been recorded forty years earlier, clearly harking back to 1960s Blue Note dates by Eric Dolphy...and Andrew Hill... All the compositions, save the Hill tune, are by leader Jason Adasiewicz, whose vibes float and sting, suspending, sustaining and sharpening notes in the grand tradition of Bobby Hutcherson, and solos are fine and dandy all round... the disc highlights are ‘Hide’ and ‘Punchbug’, which... Towards the end of the former, Josh Berman’s cornet playing incorporates the breath-sounds, growls and burrs...in use by a new generation of players who straddle the line between improv and jazz, though elsewhere, he tends to stick to more conventional timbres... On the latter, it’s Aram Shelton who edges away from the post-bop manoeuvres... **Going for a sound so close to that of one’s inspirations is a risky business, but *Rolldown* just about manage to pull it off...** ‘Varmint’ manages to avoid being a repertory-type display...”

- *Eartrip magazine*, Issue 6

“... **Top Ten Chicago Jazz Discs of 2009. ...these Chicago albums would certainly qualify in the 90th percentile of all the music I heard last year – in other words, the very top echelon of the more than 550 discs that came my way.**

... Jason Adasiewicz...has become the city’s most in-demand vibist, regularly performing with more than 20 working bands, including some led by such major Chicago new-music figures as Ken Vandermark, Nicole Mitchell, and Rob Mazurek – and the quartet called KLANG... **this second disc from his quintet *Rolldown* bounces and bristles from start to finish – it’s a rubber ball with spikes.** It helps that Adasiewicz has enlisted bassist Jason Roebke and drummer Frank Rosaly, two of the city’s most musical young improvisers... And it can’t hurt that *Rolldown*’s front line features two hornmen whose experience matches the leader’s own: both saxist Aram Shelton and cornetist Josh Berman...”

- Neil Tesser, “The year in CHICAGO jazz: Top Ten local recordings of 2009,” *Examiner*, January 11, 2010, www.examiner.com

“These are...the albums that brought me the most pleasure in 2009, and hopefully, if you haven’t already checked them out, you will now. ... My Favorite Albums of 2009 ... [#] 8. Jason Adasiewicz’s *s*’s *Rolldown*, *Varmint*”

- Michael Patrick Brady, www.michaelpatrickbrady.com

“...vibraphonist Jason Adasiewicz takes inspiration from 1960’s experimental masters such as Eric Dolphy, Ornette Coleman and Andrew Hill. But the results are distinctly his own. Adasiewicz and his quintet skillfully craft off-kilter rhythms that still manage to swing, as well as dissonant harmonies and contrapuntal melodies that adhere to an internal logic. ...

Adasiewicz’s approach to the vibes focuses more on the textural aspects of the instrument rather than its percussive characteristics. ...the colorings and atmospherics he creates under the soloists provide this disc’s signature sound. ...a sound that’s simultaneously familiar and fresh, and even a little eccentric at times.”

- John Frederick Moore, *Jazziz*, Spring 2010

“...This quintet gives more than a passing nod to the music of Thelonius Monk. Although there is no pianist, the lack of any other chordal instrument keeps the tone airy. The band interplay is not far removed from Dave Holland’s world class set of players, but more restrained and purposefully understated. Leader and vibraphonist Jason Adasiewicz’s strong background as a rock drummer frees him from sounding like his predecessors. He writes great melodies for the horns and harmonizes all the solos, including his own, in an intelligent way. His use of sustain pedal is reminiscent of Bobby Hutcherson’s playing on Eric Dolphy’s *Out to Lunch*...this disk sounds much straighter. ...melodies...are angular and have an Andrew Hill flavor. ... **This record swings...!** ...”

- Scott Steele and Jeff Melton, *Exposé*, Spring 2010

“...vibist Jason Adasiewicz’s second group-led release comprises the element of surprise along with familiar persuasions. ... As a vibist, Adasiewicz, works underneath, over-the-top and weaves throughout, while adding texture and keeping the listener on his or her toes ...

...the three-man frontline including reedman Aram Shelton and cornetist Josh Berman. ...fuse off-kilter passages with counterbalancing statements. ...on “Punchbug,”...Shelton’s lyrical clarinet lines are shrewdly offset by Berman’s forceful cornet phrasings. It’s a study in multihued contrasts... Adasiewicz and his band-mates conjure up a seamless blend of progressive-jazz and focused group interaction that attains a thoroughly enjoyable composite outlook. The artists morph the best of various musical notions and stylizations into a distinctive approach via these resonating performances that offer a prismatic exposition of compositional acumen and emotive improvisational movements.”

- Glenn Astarita, *Jazz Review*, www.jazzreview.com

“...Windy City folk have an overriding sense of place. ...The power of this mutual respect among peers is evident...

If space is what is exhibited here, than Adasiewicz' upfront vibraphone resonance supplies that factor to *Varmint*. ...the quintet...manages to showcase interludes of pure airiness. Although the solos may be linked to various Blue Note sessions by vibist Bobby Hutcherson, reedist Eric Dolphy and pianist Andrew Hill – whose “The Griots” is the only cover...the architecture of many tracks also reflects the West Coast horns and vibes experiments of stylists like Emil Richards, Teddy Charles and Victor Feldman.

Airy and rococo, “Hide” gains its distinctiveness from the stacking of instrumental textures. ...

More spiky and polyphonic are pieces such as the title track and “Green Grass”. ...

With an impressive wide dynamic range in both their composing and performing capabilities, a newer generation of Chicago craftsmen prove with CDs such as these that there's still plenty of musical inventiveness in the Windy City. ...”

- Ken Waxman, *Jazz Word Reviews*, May 12, 2010, www.jazzword.com

“... In Chicago, this vibes player is putting his instrument back on the jazz map. His quintet is talent-heavy (Josh Berman, trumpet; Aram Shelton, sax; Jason Roebke, bass; Frank Rosaly, drums), and his compositions are loaded with evocative themes. Obviously, the vibraphone is the star of the show, but there are also some beautiful exchanges between horns. ...worthy of your attention.”

- Francois Couture, *Monsieur Délire*, November 24, 2009, blog.monsieurdelire.com

“... Jason Adasiewicz and Josh Berman are in a pool of musicians who could be pressed into a post-Vandermark gang, whose aesthetic true north is the pre-Ayler '60s. *Varmint* and *Old Idea* bear this out,...

Both albums draw upon classic Blue Note albums featuring Bobby Hutcherson... As composers, Dolphy, Hill and Joe Chambers extended the terms of Monk's approach to form and vernacular; similarly, Adasiewicz and Berman use angular lines and irregular bar lengths with the offhanded playfulness that makes Monk's music as inviting as it is challenging. ...

... “Green Grass” opens with the type of Monk-alluding phrases that alternately jab and glide while moving over pungent changes, but then it opens up into hard-swinging, ostinato-driven solos by Adasiewicz and alto saxophonist Aram Shelton. While Shelton's clarinet supplies arch advanced jazz colors, it is outweighed by bassist Jason Roebke and drummer Frank Rosaly's simmering grooves... ...at mid-century, **these complementary albums may well be considered early milestones.**”

- Bill Shoemaker, *Point of Departure*, #25, www.pointofdeparture.org/

“... Jason Adasiewicz's Rolldown *Varmint*... music that dances around the dividing line between avant garde and advanced bop... a superb group performance by a group of musicians who know how to balance attunement with individual expression. Not to mention Adasiewicz's four mallet attack that produces a rich bed of chords that Berman and sax/clarinet player Aram Shelton pierce through in pleasing contrast. “Hide” is a great example of ensemble improvising that never loses sight of the harmony. ...”

- S. Victor Aaron, “Year-End Odds and Ends: Jazz, Vol. 2,” *Something Else!*, January 3, 2010, www.somethingelsereviews.com

“...Chicago has a thriving improvisational jazz scene and the man at the center of it all is **Jason Adasiewicz**. Jason plays...the vibes, and with the help of Rolldown... he **is taking the instrument that Lionel Hampton perfected to the next level**. The sound on the group's second album, *Varmint*, combines Blue Note's classic, avant-leaning '60s albums with contemporary drive, swing, energy, and attack. ...”

- *The Deli*, September 28, 2009, www.thedelimagazine.com

“Locating the vibrant, freewheeling music on this, Rolldown's second album, by identifying its roots in the freer 1960s Blue Note recordings (Andrew Hill, Eric Dolphy, Sam Rivers et al.) and in its home city Chicago's improvised music scene (Art Ensemble, AACM, Sun Ra) provides a useful shortcut...but...**Jason Adasiewicz's compositions...bristle with all the viscerally affecting energy of the current avant-rock scene** in which he used to operate. ...much of the material on *Varmint* is changes-based, but infused with the sort of informal, brawling energy that characterises the work of another Chicago influence on Adasiewicz, Ken Vandermark.

...it is the fierce interactiveness of the entire group...that makes this such a compelling recording; if the quintet can generate this much heat in a studio, their live sound must indeed be something special.”

- *The Vortex*, www.vortexjazz.co.uk

“Vibraphonist Jason Adasiewicz... has a strong feel for mainstream jazz that he pursues and invigorates with a range of free idioms. ... His band mates enrich the tunes with their own visions even as they acknowledge the written note.

Adasiewicz's originals deftly meld style and genre. On “Hide,” bassist Jason Roebke's arco comes in to meet the head set by the ensemble. ... Shelton comes in and turns the approach around with hard bop lines. ... His lines crisscross with those of Berman in a dizzying amalgam that Berman diffuses into free expression with a flurry of breathy notes before it swings out. **It's heavy, it's mainstream and it's pure joy.** ...

Adasiewicz has created a beguiling document on *Varmint* both in the scope of his writing and in the playing of his band Rolldown.”

- Jerry D'Souza, *All About Jazz*, February 12, 2010, www.allaboutjazz.com

“...*Varmint*...invites you....to explore ancient history with a modern ear. That ancient history is the 1960's New Thing, and our explorers are armed with...how that story ended.

...*Varmint* bears the vibraphonist's personal signature. ...on the six originals and a cover of Andrew Hill's “The Griot,” perhaps the closest composer to Adasiewicz's...both preferring the odd angle and shifting progression. The title track best exemplifies this approach; Adasiewicz utilizes a hearty swing, but the ground underneath is never solid, as time morphs when Adasiewicz shades Berman or Shelton. ...

With his Rolldown concept now established, the sky is the limit for Adasiewicz.”

- Mark Corroto, *All About Jazz*, December 6, 2009, www.allaboutjazz.com

“... NEW RELEASES... 10. Jason Adasiewicz: *Varmint* (Cuneiform)” - Jason Weiss, “Jazz Critics Poll: 2009,” *The Village Voice*, hullworks.net

FEATURE

“2011 BEST JAZZ MUSICIAN ... Chicago musicians have been benefiting from the empathetic harmonies, knockout improvisations, and unique sound of vibraphonist Jason Adasiewicz for years. ... But now the rest of the world is catching on, from New York Times critic Ben Ratliff to European musicians like saxophonist Peter Brötzmann and pianist Stefano Bollani... As a composer, improviser, and bandleader, he's a unique talent, not simply as a vibist, but as a broad-minded musician.”

- Peter Margasak. “Best of Chicago 2011,” *Chicago Reader*, www.chicagoreader.com