

WHAT THE PRESS HAS SAID ABOUT:

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 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

FEATURES:

on Jason Adasiewicz & Josh Berman:

JAZZIZ

“On a Sunday night at the Hungry Brain...on the north side of Chicago, Jason Adasiewicz and his band Rolldown are on stage. He’s sweating profusely while banging away at the vibraphone. Josh Berman, another local star, is delivering crisp, unhurried solos on cornet . . .this is the vibrant center of Chicago’s new generation of jazz stars.

Chicago has a long history of producing jazz musicians who build loyal following while exploring the outer reaches of the genre – Sun Ra, Fred Anderson, Muhal Richard Abrams and others – and the city continues to produce internationally renowned stars, such as Ken Vandermark, Brad Goode and Nicole Mitchell. Nonetheless, today’s local scene is dominated by a group of under 40 musicians who perform with each other in multiple project, who embrace the concept of working in bands, and who take a do it yourself approach to building an audience. ...they organize regular improvised music series at small neighborhood venues like the Hungry Brain, the Hideout and the Elastic Arts Foundation.

The four musicians profiled here are leading the way. They’re steeped in the tradition of Chicago jazz, which means they’re always exploring new sounds. They’re also building reputations well outside Chicago while holding firm to a commitment to stay in town.

...Josh Berman’s...2009 debut recording as a leader, *Old Idea* (Delmark), is loaded with Monkish angular melodies, sly humor and a sense of cool sparseness that suggests a self-possessed composer and bandleader. ...

Like the others in the circle, Berman is tapped into the city’s jazz history. The septet Josh Berman and His Gang focuses on Chicago jazz from the 1920s. ...

Berman is also scheduled to record in the fall with a quartet featuring drummer Frank Rosaly, bassist Jason Roebke and guitarist Matt Schneider, and he and Adasiewicz are beginning to play as a duo – another example of how these musicians push each other and stretch their boundaries. “Jason and I have been playing together forever,” he says. “Between him and Frank and Keefe [Jackson], I’ve just learned so much about playing and listening. The collaboration goes on.

Seemingly out of nowhere, *Sun Rooms* [Delmark] brought Jason Adasiewicz national attention. ... Then again, anyone who heard *Varmint* (Cuneiform), his previous disc made with Rolldown – a quintet also under his leadership – wouldn’t have been surprised by the acclaim. ...

“There’s just so many fantastic players in this city with many fantastic visions that you want to be a part of as many bands as you possibly can,” Adasiewicz says. “These bands are all growing because we’re all playing with each other in different contexts. ...

... Although Adasiewicz likens his approach on vibes to banging on a drum kit – he still considers drummers such as Elvin Jones to be his primary influence – the sound he coaxes from the instrument is much more nuanced. With a four-mallet technique and by constantly working the sustain pedal, Adasiewicz allows overtones of different chords to bleed into one another, creating a shimmering, almost otherworldly sound.

Adasiewicz’s compositions are equally distinctive. Rolldown relies on off-kilter rhythms and contrapuntal melodies, but with a definite sense of swing.

... "Everybody is leading their own project here, and what connects us is that we all want to give as much time to somebody else's project as we do to our own. ... No one has this feeling of being a sideman. ... that's why so many fantastic records get made and people have more of an eye on Chicago now." - John Frederick Moore, "The Chicago Way," *Jazziz*, Fall 2011

on Jason Adasiewicz

CHICAGO READER

"**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

THE NEW YORK TIMES

"... Each generation in jazz produces a small number of significant vibes players, as opposed to scores of pianists, saxophonists, trumpeters, drummers, bassists, even trombonists. ...

Those who have made their reputations over the last decade and a half, say, would include Mr. Adasiewicz (pronounced a-da-SHEV-its) and Mr. Dingman; Stefon Harris... Warren Wolf... and Matt Moran, who plays in John Hollenbeck's Claudia Quintet, among other groups. After that the way begins to grow dim.

I've been drawn to sounds made by Mr. Adasiewicz and Mr. Dingman... Both, in certain situations, play very loud...

And they both like to keep the sustain pedal down a lot...

...the sound of a long sustain on a vibraphone, whether one note or many, is one of mankind's great creations. This is an instrument that produces almost a physical representation of sound; especially with the vibrato motor going, you can almost see the chord hanging in the air. ...

Their interest in it, and also in the space between notes, distinguishes Mr. Dingman and Mr. Adasiewicz... They seem to be thinking about sound at least as much as technique. ...

Mr. Adasiewicz... studied jazz drums at DePaul for three years, playing big-band charts. He only eased into the vibraphone after dropping out of school, playing it in rock clubs around Chicago with bands like Pinetop Seven and Central Falls as well as the singer-songwriter Edith Frost. ... He didn't know anything about free improvising, he said, until about 10 years ago, when he became friendly with the cornetist Josh Berman and the drummer Mike Reed, both of whom he now plays with regularly.

... "I don't own every Bobby Hutcherson record," he said, pre-emptively. ... I never freaked out about him." (His favorite vibraphone records: Walt Dickerson's "Impressions of a Patch of Blue," an obscurity from 1965, and "Milt Jackson and the Thelonious Monk Quintet," from 1956.)

Lately, Mr. Adasiewicz said, he's started to work with the overtones that the instrument produces. "...this thing is going to ring when you hit it. ... So I've been getting into creating things by having the instrument ring almost into distortion and then manipulate what's happening. ..."

Another preoccupation, he said, is thinking of the vibes less as a solo instrument that recedes at the end of a spotlighted improvisation. He's trying to keep the sound in the mix throughout, "like the drummer keeps the sound of a ride cymbal going," he explained. ...

Something inherent to the vibraphone... is that it promotes flexibility. The jazz musicians who are having their day at the moment are those who can really make sense of jazz across the last 75 years, bridging tight and loose structure, softness and clangor, its blues and classical music elements, its swing and lack thereof. The vibraphone is both a percussive and a chordal instrument; it's a natural hybrid. ..."

- Ben Ratliff, "Creating Uncommon Vibes," *The New York Times*, July 22, 2011

ALARM MAGAZINE

"It's not easy to stand out in a talent-packed place like Chicago, but Jason Adasiewicz has made a name for himself as a strong, unique voice in the city's rich underground jazz and improvisational scene. He has lent his gorgeous, melodic vibraphone playing to literally dozens of ensembles and recordings...

It's a busy, burgeoning community, where each musician carries responsibilities for upwards of a dozen bands...

"It's a family," Adasiewicz says. "...we're growing together. We play an insane number of projects with one another, and the bands are cohesive and evolving." This camaraderie can be heard in large ensembles like Rob Mazurek's Exploding Star Orchestra, of which Adasiewicz is a crucial member, and smaller groups like Rolldown, the vibe player's personal project. ...

He credits his true education in jazz to Chicago's renowned Jazz Record Mart, where he found new sounds, new ideas, and new friends who would serve as his collaborators for many years. ...

It's also where he met cornet player Josh Berman, his one-time roommate and current collaborator in Rolldown. Adasiewicz says, "...we looked up to people like Rob Mazurek, Fred Anderson, and Ken Vandermark." ...

Along with Adasiewicz and Berman, Rolldown includes saxophone player Aram Shelton, bassist Jason Roebke, and drummer Frank Rosaly, each of whom has a remarkable number of his own projects. It's an all-star crew of young jazz improvisers who are securing their places as the next great figures in Chicago music. ...

Varmint, the second release from Adasiewicz's Rolldown, is a beautifully composed work, evoking the purity and placidity of cool jazz, as well as the adventurous spirit of records like Eric Dolphy's *Out to Lunch!*, on which vibe player Bobby Hutcherson drizzled melodic punches and demonstrated the instrument's strength for adding color and conveying intensity. Though the band is full of talented improvisers, Adasiewicz is focused on providing a solid, well-written foundation of music that sticks with listeners.

"The tunes can stand alone," he says. "They don't need improvisation. There's improv, some with direction, some without, but the emphasis is always on the tune itself." ... Andrew Hill, whose song "The Griots" is the only non-original piece featured on *Varmint*. "That's a song that can stand alone," he gushes. "The melody is so beautiful. That's all you need to hear, those beautiful changes."

The clarity of Rolldown's music is important to Adasiewicz, who has made an effort to keep the band's sound consistent and comprehensible...

Varmint was recorded at Steve Albini's Electrical Audio studios with engineer Mark Haines... "...if you're a purist, that's the place to be in Chicago..." he says. "That room is something special. It's inspirational, and to me, the sound of that room is the sound of the group."

...the members of Rolldown are comfortable with one another and share a musical vision. From the shimmering vibe runs of "Green Grass" to the loungey, horn-driven languor of "Dagger," *Varmint* is a pleasing, consonant experience that feels immediate and proximate.

The band's sound on record, so meticulously designed, makes it feel as if the listener is with them in the studio or seeing them perform..."
- Michael Patrick Brady, "Jason Adasiewicz: Virtuoso Jazz Vibraphonist," *Alarm*, July 21, 2009, www.alarm-magazine.com

DOWNBEAT

"..the force with which Jason Adasiewicz bring down his mallets sets him apart. Raising his hands far behind his head, the Chicago-based musician—who used to be a drummer—strikes the keys like a blacksmith. And when he works the damper pedal, he looks like an over-caffeinated tap-dancer. The result flows around his horn players' tricky angles in his post-bop combo Rolldown and fills up broad swathes of the frequency range in cornetist Rob Mazurek's electrified ensembles.

"The force with which I hit the vibraphone has become my sound," he said. "I've discovered that the amount of energy that I need to put into it is like hitting a drum, and the sound that comes out is completely different than just playing it lightly or just playing it normally. Philly Joe, Elvin Jones, Max Roach—they're all very, very loud drummers."

Adasiewicz's physical playing also corresponds to his engagement with the physical qualities of sound. He's put up his own money to ensure that Rolldown's albums came out on vinyl and recorded the group's second record, *Varmint* (Cuneiform), on analog tape.

"You can push tape," he said "It has this soul. ... And I hear that on the way that my instrument is recorded; that format has always been the truest sound to me."

...in the late '90s, Adasiewicz first drummed and then played vibes with several rock bands associated with Chicago's Truckstop Studio, including Pinetop Seven.

At the same time, he lived with a circle of young jazz musicians including cornetist Josh Berman...

The music he has written for Rolldown, which he formed with Berman after Andiamo's demise, has similarities to the sound of early '60s Blue Note recordings by Andrew Hill, Bobby Hutcherson and Eric Dolphy, with an added intention to emphasize musical freedom. Everyone in the group...is also a bandleader, and everyone plays in everyone else's bands. Collectively they've become associated with the Hungry Brain... "I love playing other people's music," he said. "That's my biggest inspiration to write music." "

- Bill Meyer, *Downbeat*, August 2010, Volume 77, Number 8

DOWNBEAT CRITICS POLLS & JAZZ JOURNALIST ASSOCIATION POLL

"... RISING STAR WINNERS... Vibes: Jason Adasiewicz ..."

- "DownBeat 59th Annual Critics Poll," *Downbeat*, August 2011

"Vibes... Jason Adasiewicz ... Vibes RISING STAR...Jason Adasiewicz"

- "DownBeat 58th Annual Critics Poll," *Downbeat*, August 2010, Volume 77, Number 8

"29. Mallet Instrumentalist of the year... Jason Adasiewicz"

- Lee Mergner, "Jazz Journalist Association Announces Nominations....," *Jazz Times*, April 14, 2010