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Bio information: **NEW YORK ART QUARTET**

Title: **OLD STUFF** (Cuneiform Rune 300)

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FILE UNDER: JAZZ / FREE JAZZ

"The band sharing the bill with Sonic Youth at the Seaport Atrium in lower Manhattan tonight -- the headliners, actually -- will be the New York Art Quartet, a reconvened avant-garde jazz chamber ensemble.... This is no act of charity by Thurston Moore, Sonic Youth's founder and guitarist, and an ardent devotee of '60s free jazz. The show might be one of the Bell Atlantic Jazz Festival's hottest tickets even without Sonic Youth as the opening act, such is the anticipation about the reunion of...the New York Art Quartet.... With the passage of enough time, virtually anything can become a source of nostalgia, apparently including even another era's racial frictions and cutting-edge music. But a double bill of Sonic Youth and the New York Art Quartet has even greater contemporary relevance. It demonstrates the long-term influence of '60s free jazz on extreme forms of rock-and-roll, beginning with punk and no-wave in the late '70s, if not a decade earlier with the Stooges and the MC5 -- a curious phenomenon, given free improvisation's supposedly negligible impact on mainstream jazz.... Collective improvisation was a cherished ideal in early free jazz, but aside from greater parity between horn soloists and their rhythm sections, this was often just talk. For the New York Art Quartet, collective improvisation was a raison d'etre, the band's musical starting point." -- Francis Davis, The New York Times, June 13, 1999

"...the New York Art Quartet cut some of the most powerful music in the free jazz underground." -- All About Jazz

"...a marvelously vivid and unpredictable spirit in the new jazz of the period..." -- Penguin Guide to Jazz on CD

The **New York Art Quartet** was a band that left the scene too soon. Active for barely a year and a half, the group made just two records—their self-titled debut (ESP, 1964) and *Mohawk* (Fontana, 1965), both prized by generations of listeners ever since. Co-leaders **John Tchicai** (alto sax), who participated in **John Coltrane's** ground-breaking *Ascension* album, and **Roswell Rudd** (trombone), considered to be the first free-jazz trombonist, had met a year or so earlier, working with **Bill Dixon** and others to expand the reaches of jazz. It wasn't until the summer of '64 that their own project together began to take shape. At first, bassist **Don Moore** and drummer **J.C. Moses** completed the group, having recently played with Tchicai in the **New York Contemporary Five**. But when the leaders tried out **Milford Graves** at a rehearsal, his polyrhythmic potency wowed them as the perfect complement to their ideas for a supple interplay of free improvisation within new compositional structures, and along with bassist **Lewis Worrell**, the quartet found its definitive form throughout the rest of the year. The band participated in the legendary **"October Revolution in Jazz,"** organized by Dixon and **Cecil Taylor**, at the Cellar Café, which journalist Bill Shoemaker called, "Arguably the most seminal jazz concert series ever held...it was a comprehensive four-day survey of jazz's cutting edge.... It marked the beginning of the Golden Era of do-it-yourself jazz culture in the U.S." The quartet also performed on New Year's Eve at Judson Hall, under the auspices of the Jazz Composers Guild, as part of the Four Days in December festival. After Worrell's departure, the band employed a number of bassists and performed semi-regularly through the spring of '65 at the Edith Stephen dance studio above the Village Vanguard, as well as in the Museum of Modern Art's Jazz in the Garden series. On the *Mohawk* session, in July of that year, **Reggie Workman** was the bassist, as he was on the group's brief reunion 35 years later.

By the end of that summer, Tchicai went home for a visit to Copenhagen and set up some concerts for the New York Art Quartet. Only Rudd was able to join him, so Tchicai turned to other associates old and new. Before he originally left for New York in 1962, he had known **Finn von Eyben** as one of the only adventurous bass players in Copenhagen. Eventually leaving music to become a doctor and a prominent biomedical researcher, von Eyben now lives in Norway. **Louis Moholo**, meanwhile, had come to Europe in 1964 as a member of the Blue Notes, the pioneering (and mixed-race) South African group; this is one of his earliest recordings and his first recording playing free jazz. After four decades based in London playing with **Chris McGregor's Brotherhood of Breath**, his own groups, and a host of innovative players from South Africa, Europe, and the United States, he has at last moved back to his native land. The European version of the New York Art Quartet thus represents a small but significant chapter within the group's short history. They performed two dates in Copenhagen, first at the venerable Montmartre Jazzhus, where the horn players can be heard blowing even before they arrive on stage. At the Danish Radio House ten days later, the quartet shared the bill with **Oliver Nelson's** group. Subsequently, they opened for **Ornette Coleman's** trio at the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, and did a radio gig in Hilversum which surfaced some years after as an unauthorized recording under Rudd's name on the French record label **America**. Back in New York before year's end, the co-leaders played just a few more gigs as variations of the quartet, notably with bassist **Richard Davis** at the New School and with cellist **Charlotte Moorman** at an art gallery near Carnegie Hall. Early in 1966 Rudd went off to San Francisco as part of Archie Shepp's band and Tchicai returned to live in Europe. But at last we have one more chance, with this recording, to hear them together again as the New York Art Quartet. [press release texts adapted from the liner notes by **Jason Weiss**, producer of this album]

For more information on the New York Art Quartet, see the list of online documents on the verso.

PROMOTIONAL PHOTOS



Digital [High-Resolution] versions of these images are available for download on www.cuneiformrecords.com in the "Press" section.

NEW YORK ART QUARTET

1965



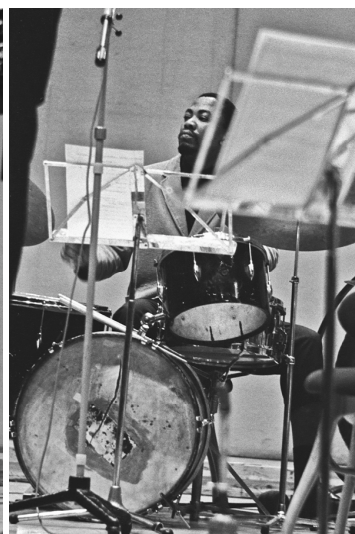
John Tchicai



Roswell Rudd



Finn von Eyben



Louis Moholo

For some online information about the New York Art Quartet and the band members in its 1965 lineup, see:

NEW YORK ART QUARTET

John Tchicai's New York Art Quartet site: http://www.johntchicai.com/rub_nyaq/page_ny.html

BAND MEMBERS FROM 1965 LINEUP

JOHN TCHICAI

Official website: <http://www.johntchicai.com/>

Bio @ Wikipedia: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Tchicai

John Tchicai Lunar Quartet @ Myspace: <http://www.myspace.com/lunarquartetfeatjohnthchicai>

John Tchicai + ICE9 @ Myspace: <http://www.myspace.com/ice9notrespassing>

ROSWELL RUDD

Official website: <http://www.roswellrudd.com/>

Bio @ Wikipedia: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roswell_Rudd

Bio @ All Music: <http://www.allmusic.com/cg/amg.dll?p=amg&sql=11:hifyxqy5ld0e>

Discography: <http://www.mindspring.com/~scala/rudd.htm>

Interview @ All About Jazz: <http://www.allaboutjazz.com/php/article.php?id=1168>

Interview @ Jazz.com: <http://www.jazz.com/features-and-interviews/2008/10/11/in-conversation-with-roswell-rudd>

Myspace: <http://www.myspace.com/roswellruddjazz>

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Roswell-Rudd/49568831423>

LOUIS MOHOLO

Bio @ Wikipedia: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Louis_Moholo

Bio @ All About Jazz: <http://www.allaboutjazz.com/php/article.php?id=25887>

Interview @ Point of Departure: http://www.pointofdeparture.org/archives/PoD-1/PoD-1_spirits_rejoice.html

Interviews @ All About Jazz: <http://www.allaboutjazz.com/articles/lond0402.htm>
<http://www.allaboutjazz.com/php/article.php?id=25887>

Blue Notes Archival site: <http://www.mfowler.myzen.co.uk/>

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