

Review Excerpts

“This project marks a return to jazz drumming for the innovative, influential Australian composer/percussionist Phil Treloar. He has lived in Japan for two decades and, having felt the urge to return to his jazz-drumming roots, sort out Melbourne’s Julien Wilson (tenor saxophone) and Philip Rex (double bass) to complete the trio.

“After one performance in Melbourne, the mutual understanding was already profound. They played two pieces of nearly an hour’s duration and each sped by in what seemed like 20 minutes, so involving was the narrative development, so beguiling the beauty and so affecting the emotional clout. Space, clarity of ideas and layering of sounds were fundamental to the success. Using unusually thin sticks, Treloar made the music burn with blue-flame intensity while playing extraordinarily softly. A crucial effect was to allow the riveting bass playing more prominence in the dialogue. ...

“Such power cannot emerge from a vacuum but it does need space for combustion to occur, and each player was alive to this, so nothing was imposed on the music. The intensity grew organically.

“This band is among the strongest you will hear.”

(John Shand, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, September 10, 2010 – Concert Review of Spaces And Streams, Seymour Centre, Sydney.)

“Third in the series of Pathways of the Mind, this 3-CD set is presented with attention to detail. Solo marimba might be too disconcerting for some but the roots of these sounds are firmly derived from the fundamentals of jazz.

“Organic in his approach, at the heart of the equation is the relationship between the improvised and the composed using the seeds of sound creation and sound byte relationships. Spontaneous improvisation can be sometimes erratic or over zealous. Not Treloar. His is a steady-handed measured approach, although the spiritual might consider him a medium for sound creation by a greater force.

“In reality, his 30-page accompanying booklet contextualizes his sensibility for improvisation kindled by the readings of Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. This great gift is revealed often throughout the three discs when open-ended meditative atonality explodes into melodic motifs like sparkling pyrotechnics.”

(★★★★★ Peter WOCKNER *Limelight* – April Edition, 2010. CD Review, of *Paradox Once Found*)

“Phil Treloar has never done things by halves. Australia’s most significant and influential improvising percussionist has always engaged in the creative process with life-and-death intensity. That the third installment of his *Pathways of the Mind* series is a triple CD of solo marimba improvisations is therefore only mildly surprising.

“It often beggars belief that these pieces were not fully composed. The Japan-based Treloar’s instinct for real-time devising of form is phenomenal. But form is a hollow shell if the content it encompasses does not engage, move and transport in some

combination, and his melodic harmonic content is so lush and multifarious as to be like gazing at a vast field of diverse flowers as they dance in a breeze. Simple ideas, meanwhile, receive complex extrapolations without losing their immediacy.

“Binding the work is the magnificently-recorded resonance and warmth of Treloar's marimba and the pervading meditative mood - echoed in an accompanying perceptive, candid and affecting essay on cultural imperialism. (I should disclose that one piece is generously dedicated to myself.)

(John Shand, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, February 27, 2010 – CD Review, of *Paradox Once Found*)

“Phil Treloar is one of the most important figures in Australian creative music. Any one of his areas of endeavor – drummer, percussionist, composer, conceptualist or bandleader – may have been enough to earn him this plaudit. Together they add up to a staggering contribution.”

(John Shand, 2009. ‘Phil Treloar : Magus’, in *Jazz – the Australian Accent*)

“I can't imagine a recording which could capture more extemporization and random acts of giving from the human spirit. ...interactions which at times border on telepathic. ... Neither courageous nor self-indulgent but honestly and faithfully expressed, clearly influenced by the over-arching maze of sound found in bushland near Milton, NSW.”

(★★★★½ Peter WOCKNER *Limelight* – April Edition, 2009. CD Review, *Shades of There*)

"Duetting as Converging Paths, Phil Treloar and Hamish Stuart generate a feast of interaction across all facets of their intimate music-making, as the paths of the former's marimba and the latter's drum-kit and percussion converge. Each can be intensely reactive to the other, or they can rove along largely parallel courses that meet at an imaginary horizon.

"Treloar generates the warmest marimba sound I've heard, each note arriving plump and round, with a finely tapered decay, and his enchanting improvisations bubble up as naturally as spring water. Stuart, meanwhile, long considered among the grooviest drummers in the land, here displays a splendour of textural invention to rival the great free drummers, and the fluency of his improvising ensures the two instruments are equal voices throughout.

“Outstanding.”

(John Shand, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, December 2008, CD review, *Shades of There*)

"Until moving to Japan some 15 years ago, Phil Treloar was Australia's key creative percussionist. ... Close your eyes and be entranced. This is improvisation at its most pure."

(John Shand, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, June 2006, CD review, *Pathways of the Mind - first series*)

"This set confirms what a fine bassist and gifted composer Cale was, and what prodigious talent Barlow displayed as a 20-year old. But the main reason I regard this as an essential purchase is the fact that it documents the creativity of, and the telepathic rapport between, Frampton and Treloar; this is so special because the mercurial Frampton is no longer with us, while Treloar lives in Japan, and performs here so rarely."

(Adrian Jackson, *RHYTHMS*, April 2005, review, *Bruce Cale Quartet Live, Adelaide Festival 1980*. Released 2004)

"So this recording provides another welcome reminder of what a strong jazz drummer Phil was."

(Adrian Jackson, 2004, linernotes, *Bruce Cale Quartet Live, Adelaide Festival 1980*. Released 2004)

"Phil Treloar is the finest improvising percussionist Australia has produced. He has been able to reach that remote plateau where musicians are able to divorce themselves from all technical and "entertainment" considerations and concentrate on listening to his collaborators and responding with a pure stream of self-expression. He can also create solo improvisations of spell-binding beauty and seemingly bottomless inventiveness."

(John Shand, *East West Arts*, 2004)

"Treloar's concert demonstrated how thoughts can be transformed back into feelings during a live performance. [His] sincerity and passion conveyed the essence of Frampton's creative spirit. The work was boldly uncompromising and expressionistic, yet also contained passages of subtle melancholy and delicate beauty..."

(Jessica Nicholas, *The Age*, 2003 - review, *SHADES: in memoriam Roger Frampton*)

"... stripped of the artifice of style, the vulgarity of cliché and the idiocy of pretence. It is not so much a work for four specific instruments and spoken word, as for five individuals capable of giving of themselves, rather than their prowess. This sets Treloar's work apart."

(John Shand, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, November, 2002 - review, The Studio, Sydney Opera House)

"Phil is one of the really exciting jazz drummers in this country, and now he is establishing himself as one of the leading composers of his generation. Working with him is bound to help us all change our musical direction, in a beneficial way."

(Simone de Haan, *The Age*, May 1989 - an interview with Adrian Jackson)

"If pressed to choose one person who best represents artistic "open-door" practice, Phil Treloar certainly fits the bill. ... Treloar moves fluently between the worlds of contemporary classical composition and avant-garde or experimental jazz. In fact, his work is evidence that categories such as this are really no longer very useful."

(Kathy Peters, *24 Hours*, September, 1988)

"Students at the Tasmanian Conservatorium of Music are taking part in one of the most exciting contemporary music projects ever held in this state. ... When the music of contemporary Australian composer and percussionist Phil Treloar is performed, it is more than just the music of Phil Treloar which is heard."

(Rosina Beaumont, *The Mercury*, June 18, 1988)

"Pianist Mike Nock brought with him Sydney drummer Phil Treloar, with whom he shared an almost telepathic communication ... Treloar's bobbing-and-weaving style and completely unselfconscious body language behind the drums produced a stunning performance that was one of the festival's highlights."

(Bruce Morley, the *Northern Advocate* (New Zealand), August 1987 - review, Southern Comfort Jazz and Blues Festival, Auckland)

"... the exciting, curiously unpredictable drumming of Phil Treloar, one of the real revelations of the weekend."

(Graham Reid, the *New Zealand Herald*, June 1987 - review, Southern Comfort Jazz/Blues Festival)

"...'Double Drummer' by the jazz-man, Phil Treloar, was rumoured to be the 'Sacre du Printemps' of the night, the environmental audio-visual revolutionary piece that would, if not fling open the doors of popular resistance to Australian electronics, at least kick them ajar."

(Anna-Maria Dell'oso, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, May 1982 - feature article for the Fourth Biennale of Sydney)

"This concert confirmed that Phil Treloar has struck out on a highly original course in Australian music. Though utilising the language of American jazz, his music is increasingly an authentic expression of the experience of being Australian. If we are to have jazz music in this country which is the outgrowth of our own culture, we have to look to musicians like Treloar and his colleagues."

(Eric Myres, *Jazz*, Jan./ Feb. 1982 - feature edition)

"To the casual observer someone like drummer Phil Treloar must appear as a fanatic. Perhaps he is. In some situations he seems perverse. ... However you may take him, the real Phil Treloar sits down at the drums every time."

(John Clare, the *Nation Review*, April 1977 - feature article for *Music is an Open Sky* festival)
