CD/LP/Track Review

http://j.mp/yZ1qYR

Eugene Chadbourne and Warren Smith: Odd Time (2012)

Recommend 20 Tweet

By **RAUL D'GAMA ROSE**, Published: February 4, 2012

All art is activist; or at least it should be when it challenges established and accepted forms that play to the *laissez-faire*, the reactionary and the antisocial—and the greater good of the greater number of people experiencing (or trying to experience) it. The music of Beethoven was just so, the composer cancelling the dedication of his mighty Symphony No. 3 ("Eroica") to Napoleon Bonaparte after the Frenchman declared himself Emperor. So, too, has some of the finest music of modern times been activist, whether stemming from the folk tradition, the blues or jazz. Every time this has been forgotten a bard has raised his head and voice: Woody Guthrie, Bob Dylan, Charlie Parker, Thelonious Monk, Charles Mingus...and Eugene Chadbourne... and of course, the mighty Warren Smith.

The artist-as-activist has been a role that bards and troubadours have accepted and played for centuries, and in contemporary times most artists have, after a brief burst in the 1950s and '60s, been too afraid to do so lest they be muzzled. So hats off to Steven Walcott of Engine Studios; and hats off to Eugene Chadbourne and Warren Smith, the "Wis" who have come together to create *Odd Time*, a forceful, darkened mirror of music that reflects the sign of the times. A lot of protest music thins in significance because the narrative lacks lyricism—even a rough, one, but not the music of *Odd Time*.

Here is music that catches the wave that rocks the pulse of a disenchanted generation, with concrete poetic imagery acutely melded in with angular and obtuse music. Simplistic titles such as "The People With Too Much" are forgiven when Chadbourne delves into the language of the dispossessed, mixing Frantz Fanon with Bob Dylan, and Eugene Chadbourne with Jerry Garcia. His cause is enhanced with the dark parabolic elevations of Warren Smith's Gatling gun-like snare and tom-toms, punctuated with depth bombs on the bass drum.

The obtuse atonality and flat nature of the harmonies are a dramatic rather than musical device, suggesting social madness that culminates in the thump of an echoing gong which ends "New New War War. This dramaturgy is also carried through on other charts, such as "Checkers of Blood" and "Xubitunt."

"Mourning of the Praying Mantis" is a fine improvised tune and features Chadbourne's breathless banjo work and inspired atmospherics on vibes, marimba and other percussion objects. But nothing can prepare the ear for the tactile assault on the senses of the sensational "Odd Time for Two," which destroys rational concepts of tempo as well as harmony. The complete madness of this Chadbourne-Smith sonic expedition is resolved in the end as it morphs into a song with burnished harmonies, but not before the duo challenges the status quo with music that is humorous and ahead of its time—both literally and figuratively.

Track Listing: The People Who Knew Too Much; New New War War; Mourning of the Praying

Recent Popular Random Search

Majamisty TriO
Mistyland

The Hoppin' John Orchestra
The Hoppin' John Orchestra

Lorraine Feather
Tales of the Unusual

Jon Balke Batagraf
Say And Play

Lorraine Feather
Tales of the Unusual

Yuka Mito
Time After Time

Showcase Release

Advertise

Fractals

Rick Stone

Buy Now

The Arrival

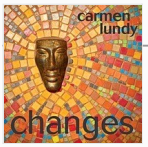
Philip Baumgarten

Buy Now

Autumn in New York

Ferit Odman

Buy Now



Changes

Carmen Lundy

Buy Now

Tragedies Of Love

Laurence Cook

Buy Now

Mantis; Checkers of Blood; Xubitunt; Water Song; Odd Time For Two (Free Improv); Put Me Back in the River; Choppin' Down Weeds.

Personnel: Eugene Chadbourne: 12-string banjo, banjo, vocals; Warren Smith: drums, tympani, marimba, percussion, vibes.

Record Label: Engine Studios | Style: Modern Jazz

Eugene Chadbourne Profile | Follow Eugene Chadbourne • Also at

More Photos of Eugene Chadbourne

Be the first to post a comment on Eugene Chadbourne and Warren Smith's Odd Time.

Signup & post a comment

From Vegas With Love

Sarah Montes

Buy Now

Contest Giveaways

Tito Carrillo

About
Enter

Jason Stein

About
Enter

Ferit Odman

About
Enter

Frank Herzberg

About
Enter

Christian McBride

About
Enter

Joan Stiles

About
Enter

Photo Gallery

Photos of the Week • Popular • Recommended • Widget

Local Calendar

• Search

Date	Title / Musician	Venue	Location
Feb 08	Aaron Lewis	Bergen Performing Arts Center	Englewood, NJ
Feb 08	David Sanborn	Ridgefield Playhouse	Ridgefield, CT
Feb 08	Kat Gang	The Rose Club at The Plaza Hotel	New York, NY
Feb 08	Tim McCall	Aza Lounge (New York, NY)	New York, NY
Feb 08	Jason Rigby	Cornelia Street Cafe	New York, NY
Feb 08	Aki Ishiguro Group	55 Bar	New York, NY
Feb 08	Camila Meza & Friends	Antibes Bistro	New York, NY
Feb 08	Renee Manning	Brooklyn Terrace	Brooklyn, NY
Feb 08	Confess	The Bass Line	Mount Vernon, NY
Feb 08	Sky Room	Skys The Limit Wednesdays	New York, NY
Feb 09	New Tricks	Garage Restaurant & Cafe	New York, NY
Feb 09	Ekah Kim	Tutuma Social Club	New York, NY

-- View by Festival -- 6

-- More Event Options -- 6

ARTICLES
CD Reviews
Articles
Interviews
Featured Stories
Live Reviews

SOUNDS
Free Daily MP3
Daily Video
Jazz Radio
Jazz Session Podcast
AAJ @ Pandora

NEWS
Today's News
Local News
Top Read
Top Recommended
News Ticker

CALENDAR
Concerts & Festivals
Submit a Show/Event
Search for a Show
Upcoming CD Releases
AAJ Editorial Calendar

DIRECTORIES
Musicians
AAJ Staff
Clubs / Venues
Festivals / Cruises
Radio Stations

PHOTOS
View Pro Photos
View All Photos
View Popular Photos
Manage Your Photos
Upload Your Photos

Advertise | On Demand Player Service | Event Syndication Service | Site Map | Games for iPhone/iPad

All material copyright © 2011 All About Jazz and/or contributing writer/visual artist. All rights reserved | Privacy Policy

AOL Music Partner