

Barbara Frenz, Review of Andrew Cyrille (d), Paul Dunmall (ts, bagpipes), and Henry Grimes (b, vn), *Opus de Life: Profound Sound Trio*, Porter Records PRCD-4032 (2009), in *Jazz Podium* (2009), no. 58, p. 72.

The improvisation starts abruptly with *This Way, Please*, which takes up roughly the first fifteen minutes. Here one can find that the three musicians already have much to tell each other while still feeling their way. The trio quickly finds an egalitarian mode of communication. Intensity immediately fills the room, a ceaseless torrent of statements, rejoinders, and new statements, interspersed with new, delicately discerned sound relationships and continuations. Those who heard the concert live (like the present writer) saw Andrew Cyrille, at the very beginning, standing in front of his working equipment with his back to the audience, testing the spatial acoustics with his drumsticks. He deliberately entered the ritual of musical performance art, generating various tapping sounds and showing that from moment to moment, or from place to place, he rediscovers the drumset afresh. It was also Cyrille who gave the album its name, *Opus De Life*. The rattlesnake drumstrokes of this universally trained musician, the pizzicati from Henry Grimes, at first remaining discreetly in the background, only to switch quickly into the foreground with heavy, dark-toned bowstrokes (as if two bass players were on stage), and the cello-like tone from Paul Dunmall's tenor saxophone launch the trio onto its journey, accompanied again and again by cries from the excited audience. The British reedman Paul Dunmall, who combines free jazz with folk elements and for a long time traveled completely different paths with Johnny Guitar Watson, hacks through the dense undergrowth of cymbal sounds and bass pizzicati with low-register blows from his tenor-machete. Then he switches to ballad-like passages, followed by aggressive runs propelled by a wealth of pulsating improvised ideas from Andrew Cyrille. *Call Paul*, the roughly six-minute second section of *Opus De Life*, contains what is probably the strongest folk sequence on the recording: a finely gradated sound-painting of acrobatic freestyle violin, Caribbean bells, and Scottish bagpipes, the latter prolonged with baffling verisimilitude by Henry Grimes on the violin. The third piece, *Whirligigging*, does full credit to its title: Andrew Cyrille's relaxed but gradually accelerating drum rolls, seemingly directly descended from New Orleans, mingle with cheers of delight from the audience. After three-and-a-half minutes they lead into the seventeen-minute *Beyond*, introduced by Paul Dunmall's powerful tenor playing. Occasionally we hear a Rollins-like snippet from *Oleo*, a deeper and rougher Ayleresque tone, and judiciously applied Coltrane-like tenor shouts. The whole occurs in interaction with bass runs of orchestral proportions, bowed and plucked in swift alternation. Much as in the 'epic theatre' of Bertolt Brecht, a jolting beat wrenches the audience from what is perhaps the loveliest violin-saxophone sequence of the evening. Here Henry Grimes's extraordinary ear and intuitive sense of timbre (e.g. Paul Dunmall's *East Broadway Rundown*-like sounds on the saxophone mouthpiece) are heard to special advantage. After the drum beat, Andrew Cyrille continues the piece with a fairly long solo in increasing tempo, accompanied by twitterings from Dunmall's saxophone. Those who listen closely can hear Cyrille panting several times at the end of his solo act. He had almost pressed his face on the drum, remained in this unsettling posture for a good thirty seconds, and finally startled the audience yet again with a sudden beat. Roaring applause. After Lewis Barnes's brief words about the musicians comes a seven-minute encore, *Futurity*, giving us another chance to experience the extraordinarily tight-knit communication among these three musicians.

(English translation by J. Bradford Robinson)