

Cadence Jazz Magazine - January 2016

BARRY WALLENSTEIN is a poet who over the years has appeared on almost a dozen records with, among others Stanley Cowell, Charles Tyler, Arthur Blythe, John Hicks and Vincent Chancey. His latest is WHAT WAS, WAS [Audioscope cd 002]. Along with LUIGI ARCHETTI [gtr/electronics] and MARIO MARCHISELLA [perc] the group DRASTIC DISLOCATIONS was born. The music here is not jazz but is marked by elements of jazz, rock and country and rather than spread out in extended voice the music here is more simply an accompaniment, and sometimes an emphasis, to the poetry. This issue comprises 14 [40:47] short poems by Wallenstein, whose work is more narratives-in-prose than classic poetry. Wallenstein, as of this writing, is 75 and the adjective beat is often applied to his work. Perhaps, but as a person also of that era, his work has never immediately suggested that to me rather instead the beats as an influence, might be more accurate. If you're familiar with The Clown (a recorded collaboration with Jean Shepard's prose and Charlie Mingus' music), Wallenstein's style might suggest that form of story-prose. His work is rarely political but more philosophical, with short narratives/observations, often in the third person. His prose neither howls at the moon nor dwells in self pity but simply speaks in a weary almost dispassionate voice that has been consistent through his almost 40 years of recording. His voice is dispassionate but caring, mellifluous with a quiet rhythm and meter. His tone, like Shepard's, is memorable and on first listening experience, one hears his work but on closer or repeated listens one hears the text. The text, which is provided in a booklet with the recording, more easily reveals the violence and love and caring and so-forth of the poetry. But make no mistake his voice is integral to his poetry; hearing it and reading it is a very different experience. If you're already a follower of Wallenstein's recordings you will enjoy this, even with backing of a different, but very effective, nature. If you're not familiar with his work start here or anywhere for the experience. This recording is available on CD or LP and worth the tariff.

PAPATAMUS January 2016 Cadence Magazine (aka Bob Rusch)

SUCCESSFUL SYMBIOSIS

by Hanspeter Kuenzler "Neue Zürcher Zeitung NZZ" 30th September 2015
The Music-Poetry of Drastic Dislocations

Drastic Dislocations is the title of a poetry collection by the 75-year-old New Yorker Barry Wallenstein. It is also the name of a Swiss-American music project, in which all three of the participating artists clearly step beyond the limits of their traditional artistic realms. Wallenstein has already recorded several albums on which he has been accompanied by music – up to now by free jazz

From Session to Album

The multi-instrumentalist Mario Marchisella was responsible for the kettledrums at the Zurich Opera until he established himself as a composer of film music. And the Zurich-based artist and

guitarist Luigi Archetti is best known in these parts as an improviser and electronic collagist. The collaboration among these three men began when Marchisella met with Wallenstein for a spontaneous jam session during a retreat on Elba; later he invited the latter to give a concert in Zurich, where Archetti joined them for the first time.

After two days of intensive recording, the Drastic Dislocations Trio had developed the material for the present album, *What Was, Was*. This album distinguishes itself in a very welcome way from other poetry readings with music. Instead of under-or sometimes over-painting the poet's words with appropriate tones or sounds, or loading them down with virtuoso riffs, these musicians are intent on creating a mood in which the words can spread out and breathe.

From Swing to Rockabilly

Instead of snorting and leaping free-jazz saxophone, this music is composed of solid guitar parts which range, however, from jazzy swing through on-the-road folksong to rockabilly and rock-band feedback. The sounds are spiced and rhythmically held together by powerful percussion and the contribution of all kinds of electronics. The result is art that is neither precious nor pretentious. The musical accompaniment could stand completely on its own. In combination with Barry Wallenstein's sonorous song-speech (he reminds us, by the way, of David Thomas of Pere Ubu) a new symbiosis is born, which uncovers on both sides, new depths and new wit.

Drastic Dislocations: *What Was, Was* (Audioscope/Irascible)
live in Zurich, Helsinki-Club, 30th September.

