

Matthew Shipp

With his unique and recognizable style, pianist Matthew Shipp worked and recorded vigorously during the 1990s, creating music in which free jazz and modern classical intertwine. He first became known in the early '90s as the pianist in the David S. Ware Quartet, and soon began leading his own dates -- most often including Ware bandmate and leading bassist William Parker -- and recording a number of duets with a variety of musicians, from the legendary Roscoe Mitchell to violinist Mat Maneri, who began appearing on recordings in the 1990s. Through his range of live and recorded performances and unswerving individual development, Shipp came to be regarded as a prolific and respected voice in creative music by the decade's close.

Born in the 1960s and raised in Wilmington, DE, Shipp grew up around '50s jazz recordings. He began playing piano at the young age of five, and decided to focus on jazz by the time he was 12. Shipp played on a Fender Rhodes in rock bands while privately devouring recordings by a variety of jazz players. His first mentor was a man in his hometown named Sunyata, who had an enthusiasm for a variety of studies in addition to music. Shipp later studied music theory and improvisation under Clifford Brown's teacher Robert "Boisey" Lawrey, as well as classical piano and bass clarinet for the school band. After one year at the University of Delaware, Shipp left and took lessons with Dennis Sandole for a short time, after which he attended the New England Conservatory of Music for two years.

Shipp moved to N.Y.C. in 1984 and soon met bassist William Parker, among others. Both were playing with tenor saxophonist Ware by 1989. Meanwhile, Shipp had debuted as a recording artist in a duo with alto player Rob Brown on *Sonic Explorations*, recorded in November 1987 and February 1988. Shipp married singer Delia Scaife around 1990. He then went on to lead his own trio with Parker and drummers Whit Dickey and Susie Ibarra. Shipp has led dates for a number of labels, including FMP, No More, Eremite, Thirsty Ear, Silkheart, and more.

In 2000, Shipp began acting as curator for Thirsty Ear's Blue Series. This excellent series hosted a number of Shipp's own recordings, as well as the recordings of William Parker, Tim Berne, Roy Campbell, Craig Taborn, Spring Heel Jack, and Mat Maneri. The following year saw the release of *Nu Bop*, an exploration into traditional jazz, followed closely by its 2003 counterpart, *Equilibrium*. In 2004 Shipp released *Harmony and Abyss*, a meditation on repetitive melodic and harmonic structures. One arrived in January 2006 and *Piano Vortex* followed a year later. (Source: allmusic.com)

Joe Morris

Joe Morris is widely considered to be one of the most original and important jazz musicians of our time. *Down Beat* Magazine called him "the preeminent free music guitarist of his generation. . .". Will Montgomery writing in *WIRE* magazine called him "one of the most profound improvisers at work in the US." He is originally from New

Haven, Connecticut. He began playing in 1969 at the age of 14 and is self-taught. He moved to Boston in 1975 and resided there until 1986 and again from 1989-2001. In 1981 he co-founded Boston Improvisers Group (BIG). He was involved throughout his time in Boston in organizing concerts, festivals and performance series at local venues that featured Boston based musicians as well as nationally known Americans and Europeans. In 1983 he started RITI records and released his first recording "Wraparound". He cites Cecil Taylor, Eric Dolphy, Leroy Jenkins, Thelonious Monk, Jimi Hendrix, Anthony Braxton, Jimmy Lyons, Ornette Coleman and West African string music as major influences. He has performed with Anthony Braxton, Matthew Shipp, William Parker, David S. Ware, Han Bennink, Joe Maneri, Ken Vandermark, Barre Phillips, Paul Rutherford, Rob Brown, John Butcher, Eugene Chadbourne, DKV Trio, Aaly Trio, Daniel Carter, Rashid Bakr, Wilbur Morris, Dewey Redman, Lawrence "Butch" Morris, Andrew Cyrille, Kidd Jordan, Alvin Fielder, Fred Anderson, Ivo Perlman, Andrea Parkins, Hamid Drake, Thurman Barker, Fred Hopkins, Bern Nix, Joe McPhee, Billy Bang, Lowell Davidson, Peter Kowald, Simon Fell, Roy Campbell Jr, Ralph Malik, Whit Dickey, Sabir Mateen, Mark Dresser, Gerry Hemingway, Warren Smith, Tim Berne, Susie Ibarra, Mat Maneri and many others. He has also performed as a member of William Parker's Organic Ensemble, Pipeline 2000, Jim Hobbs Ghost Band, Alan Silva's Celestial Communications Orchestra, Simon Fell Orchestra and in a large ensemble led by Leroy Jenkins. He currently leads various groups including Abstract Forest, a 20+ piece improvising ensemble, as well as performing solo, in duos and as a freelance guitarist and double bassist. He is featured as leader, co-leader and sideman on over 50 recordings. Many of his recordings as a leader have been named among Writer's Choice (best of the year) in the Village Voice, Chicago Tribune, Wire, Coda, and Jazziz. He was the first guitarist to lead a session ("Symbolic Gesture" 1994) on the Soul Note/Black Saint Label. In addition to his own Riti Records, he has recorded for the labels AUM Fidelity, Thirsty Ear, Ayler, Knitting Factory, Okka Disc, OmniTone, Avant, Incus, Hat Hut, ECM, Leo, Homestead, NoMore, About Time, Clean Feed, Skycap and Rogue Art, Ayler and Cunieform. He was nominated for a 2001 Cal Arts Alpert Award. He has performed workshops and master classes in a wide variety of settings throughout North America and Europe. He has taught improvisation and/or guitar on the faculty at Tufts University Experimental College, Southern Connecticut State University, and New School University. He is currently on the faculty in the Jazz and Contemporary Improvisation Department at New England Conservatory and in the Modern American Music Department at Longy School of Music.

Whit Dickey

Free jazz drummer Whit Dickey first stepped into the spotlight as a leader with the release of his Transonic album from Aum Fidelity in 1998. Two years later, Wobbly Rail issued his Big Top release. Previously, he was best known for his solid work with Matthew Shipp and David S. Ware, with whom Dickey split in 1996. Early the following year, the drummer began composing the works that would be included on Transonic. Dickey penned all but two songs, "Kinesis" and "Second Skin," on the collection, and he even had a hand in those with the help of his fellow musicians on the album. The original compositions give a nod to the influence of "Criss Cross" and "Off Minor" from the

legendary Thelonious Monk. Dickey recorded the album with the aid of Rob Brown on flute and alto saxophone, and Chris Lightcap on bass. In 2001, Dickey recorded half a dozen of his compositions with Mat Maneri, Shipp, and Brown under the name Nommonsemble, and put out Life Cycle through Aum Fidelity.