



MARS WILLIAMS & HAMID DRAKE

I know You Are But What Am I? (Mars Archive #1)

Label

CORBETT VS. DEMPSEY

Format

CD

Catalog Number

CVSD 105CD

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\$10.99

Release Date

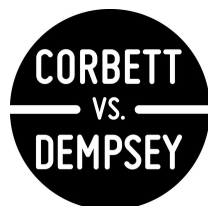
03/01/24

Territory

NORTH AMERICAN EXCLUSIVE

Genre

FILE UNDER - W - JAZZ



DESCRIPTION

At the tail end of 1996, saxophonist **Mars Williams** and drummer **Hamid Drake** took the tall corner stage at Chicago's Empty Bottle for two sets of duets. The rock club had just started a weekly *Jazz & Improvised Music Series*, curated by **Ken Vandemark** and **John Corbett**, which would run for nearly a decade. This rare pairing brought together two pivotal figures in the city's creative music scene, both of whom had extensive experience in diverse areas of music, from the free jazz focus of this intimate encounter to Mars's stints in rock with the **Waitresses** and the **Psychedelic Furs** and Hamid's work in **Mandingo Griot Society**, playing in reggae house bands, and lending rhythms to hits by **Herbie Hancock**. As eclectic as these inputs were, in the deep souls of Williams and Drake they added to the players' burgeoning inventive resources, rather than urging the players to pastichery. In the venerable dialogical lineage of saxophone and drum kit, these two contemporary ninjas indeed invented their own approach, very different, for instance, from other such duo settings for Drake, like those with **Fred Anderson**, **Peter Brötzmann**, **Joe McPhee**, or Ken Vandermark. Here, the fiery reed-work of Williams lends the concert a special urgency and punch, Drake's funk trap imbued with G-force, his cymbals ringing with nuance, his toms speaking like a whole West African drum choir. Williams responds to this positive energy with one of his most commanding performances, starting with his composition "The Worm" (written for **Dennis Rodman** of the **Bulls**), and continuing through a series of phenomenal improvisations. Released by CvsD as part of a series of archival Mars Williams CDs, hand selected by Williams shortly before his untimely death in 2023, *I Know You Are But What Am I?* goes on the record proclaiming the lasting power of Mars Williams, especially in the company of a master like Hamid Drake.

TRACKLISTING

01. The Worm (10:20)
02. I Know (8:01)
03. You Are (13:20)
04. But What Am I? (12:17)

HIGHLIGHTS

- Volume one of a series of archival **Mars Williams** CDs, hand selected by Williams shortly before his untimely death in 2023, *I Know You Are But What Am I?* goes on the record proclaiming the lasting power of Mars Williams, especially in the company of a master like **Hamid Drake**.
- Here, the fiery reed-work of Williams lends the concert a special urgency and punch, Drake's funk trap imbued with G-force, his cymbals ringing with nuance, his toms speaking like a whole West African drum choir.
- RIYL: **Fred Anderson**, **Peter Brötzmann**, **Joe McPhee**, **Mandingo Griot Society**, **Herbie Hancock**.

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