

## Musings of a Bahamian Son

Poems and other words

by Joe McPhee  
with Ken Vandermark

# JOE MCPHEE/KEN VANDERMARK Musings of a Bahamian Son: Poems and Other Words

Label

**CORBETT VS. DEMPSEY**

Format

**CD**

Catalog Number

**CVSD 109CD**

UPC

759624575653



Store Price

**\$10.99**

Release Date

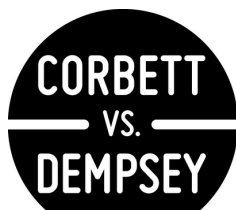
**05/17/24**

Territory

**NORTH AMERICAN EXCLUSIVE**

Genre

**FILE UNDER - M - JAZZ**



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## DESCRIPTION

**Joe McPhee** is one of the great multi-instrumentalists of contemporary improvised music. His instrumental battery has included saxophones, clarinets, valve trombone, pocket trumpet, sound-on-sound tape recorder, and space organ, but another arrow in his quiver is text. McPhee has been writing poems since the 1970s. He occasionally introduces one into performance, as an introduction or afterword to music, and in recent years he's been known to do full-on readings, text only, featuring his inimitable sense of dramatic timing intoned in his rich voice. The poems range from the observational to the political to the surreal. They're composed in rhyme or according to an internal rhythm, sometimes utterly prosaic, sometimes fantastic and flamboyant. A few of them capture the immediacy of improvised music more acutely than any critical writing on the subject, his half-century immersion in the craft of free music having given him a bottomless cup to draw on and his sensitivity to the nuances of language providing a host of palpable metaphors and metonyms, similes and strophes. The poems are marvels on the page, but they really take flight in McPhee's mouth. In 2021, during a flurry of pandemic-inspired poetic activity, he traveled to Chicago expressly to record a program of his poems. For the studio date, he invited saxophonist and clarinetist **Ken Vandermark** to play duets as interludes between groupings of the poems. Then Vandermark, engineer **Alex Inglizian**, and the CvsD team sat breathless in the Experimental Sound Studio control room as McPhee proceeded to perform his poetry nonstop and without repetition for nearly two hours. The result is *Musings of a Bahamian Son*, the first full-length release dedicated to McPhee's writing, with 27 poems interspersed with nine musical interludes and a postlude.

## TRACKLISTING

- |                                                |                                              |
|------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| 01. Something                                  | 18. Vieux Vin Blanc                          |
| 02. Interlude                                  | 19. The Grand Marquis                        |
| 03. A's New Day                                | 20. Interlude 5                              |
| 04. Violets for Pia                            | 21. Invocation                               |
| 05. Guitar                                     | 22. Interlude 6                              |
| 06. Baby, Baby, Baby                           | 23. A Meeting in Chicago                     |
| 07. Please, Sweet Mistress, Kiss Me Once       | 24. I'm Just Saying (for the Peter Brötzmann |
| More Before I Die (for Duke Ellington)         | Chicago Tentet at Journey's End)             |
| 08. Percussion Bitter Sweet (for Max Roach)    | 25. New Chicago Blues                        |
| 09. Interlude 2                                | 26. Interlude 7                              |
| 10. Hat and Beard (for Eric Dolphy and         | 27. Rock 'n' Roll Lover                      |
| Thelonious Monk)                               | 28. Interlude 8                              |
| 11. Interlude 3                                | 29. Party Lights                             |
| 12. Homeless                                   | 30. Tree Dancing                             |
| 13. Driva Man 2 (dedicated to Oscar Brown      | 31. Echoes of Memory                         |
| Jr.)                                           | 32. Magic Mirror                             |
| 14. A Song for Beggars                         | 33. The Loneliest Woman (for Ornette         |
| 15. Interlude 4                                | Coleman)                                     |
| 16. The Last of the Late Great Finger-Wigglers | 34. Interlude 9                              |
| 17. Long Story Short (for Peter Brötzmann)     | 35. Tell Me How Long Has Trane Been Gone     |
|                                                | (for John Coltrane and James Baldwin)        |
|                                                | 36. The Ship with Marigold Sails             |
|                                                | 37. Postlude                                 |

## HIGHLIGHTS

- *Musings of a Bahamian Son* is the first full-length release dedicated to **Joe McPhee's** writing, with 27 poems interspersed with nine musical interludes and a postlude.
- In 2021, during a flurry of pandemic-inspired poetic activity, he traveled to Chicago expressly to record a program of his poems. For the studio date, he invited saxophonist and clarinetist **Ken Vandermark** to play duets as interludes between groupings of the poems.
- The poems on this album range from the observational to the political to the surreal. They're composed in rhyme or according to an internal rhythm, sometimes utterly prosaic, sometimes fantastic and flamboyant.

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