



FICTIONAL SOUVENIRS Volatile Object

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TROST

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TROST

DESCRIPTION

The second album from the high-caliber improvising trio **Fictional Souvenirs** captures a visceral meeting between three of today's improvised music's most idiosyncratic, elusive figures. On *Volatile Object*, Pat Thomas (piano and electronics), **John Butcher** (saxophones), and **Ståle Liavik Solberg** (drums) were recorded live at London's Café Oto in January of 2023. Since emerging in the 1980s, saxophonist John Butcher has been one of the most important figures in a second wave of British free improvisation, adapting the innovations of pioneers like **Derek Bailey** and **Evan Parker** for a new generation. His musical language adapted those practices with a new emphasis on pure sound, including the use of amplification or reverb-rich spaces. Thomas and Butcher first played together on a Derek Bailey Incus night in 1993. Solberg has been performing with Butcher for more than a decade, often in duo settings, but also alongside figures like bassist **Barre Phillips** and pianist **Kaja Draksler**. Still, their connection with Thomas stands out. In 2019 Astral Spirits released the album that gave the trio its name, *Fictional Souvenirs*, a live session from the beloved and deeply missed London venue Iklectik, where Thomas eschewed piano in favor of a Moog Theremini and electronics. The results from the Oto concert captured on *Volatile Object* reinforce the special rapport of these musicians, elevating the connection heard on the debut album into something truly sublime. The new album includes both sets from that thrilling evening, with Thomas on grand piano during the first half, electronics for the second. The instrumentation obviously alters the sound of each set, with the piano providing a more familiar thrust as Thomas injects thunderous left-hand patterns and skittery upper register runs with his other hand to illustrate the group's deep engagement with free jazz history. As much as Butcher is known for his original language, his roots in swing-driven sound peak through the proceedings, with forceful tenor blowing that locks in with Solberg's deliciously off-kilter propulsion. The electronics used in the second set reveal a radically different side of the trio, pushing towards a steadily evolving flow of sound-rooted abstraction. Of course, what binds the two sets together is the fierce commitment to spontaneity and heightened listening. The members of the trio push one another out of any comfort zone just as much as their sounds magically coalesce.

TRACKLISTING

01. Run Of Luck (15:15)
02. Crimps (5:05)
03. Heat Of Absorption (24:05)
04. Eye Level (4:21)

HIGHLIGHTS

- The second album from the high-caliber improvising trio **Fictional Souvenirs** captures a visceral meeting between three of today's improvised music's most idiosyncratic, elusive figures.
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