



**The Charles Mingus Centennial Sessions, Vol. 2**  
**Mingus Big Band (Candid)**  
 by Ken Dryden

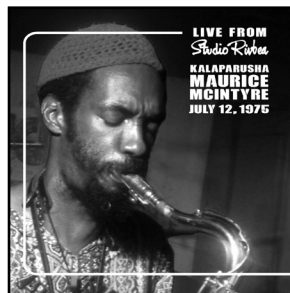
Far too often the music of jazz composers gradually fades from view after their deaths, rarely being performed or recorded. But since the passing of Charles Mingus in 1979, the Mingus Big Band has continued to explore both his recorded works as well as his compositions not yet recorded (or, in some cases, never previously performed), both live and in-studio. This second (download-only) volume celebrating the centennial of Mingus' birth was recorded in January 2020 and features 34 outstanding musicians in various configurations, with many of the arrangements being brand new for this recording. Veteran bassist Boris Kozlov, who plays the late maestro's 1927 Ernst Heinrich Roth double bass, co-leads the band with alto saxophonist Alex Foster and a rotating cast.

The band roars out of the gate with a rousing rendition of "Peggy's Blue Skylight" arranged for big band by the late baritone saxophonist (and Mingus Big Band alum) Ronnie Cuber. This is its first recording, with potent solos by Tatum Greenblatt (trumpet), Coleman Hughes (trombone) and Theo Hill (piano). Kozlov's scoring of "New York Sketchbook" (a

forgotten gem from 1956) showcases the pianist at length as the band explores the diverse Manhattan neighborhoods of the era, as only Mingus could depict them musically. "GG Train" is a lesser-known Mingus work (originally recorded in 1959), but never a part of his regular repertoire. Kozlov's recasting keeps its irregular tempo, which alternates between frenetic and leisurely, much like the erratic speed of the subway train it was named after. Conrad Herwig (trombone), Alex Sipiagin (trumpet) and Tommy Campbell (drums) provide sufficient fire in their individual features, while the ensemble negotiates this demanding piece effortlessly.

Perhaps the most striking chart on this release is Kozlov's arrangement of "She's Just Popular Miss Hybrid", which was essentially a Mingus solo piano improvisation from *Mingus Plays Piano*. Kozlov saw the potential in this unexplored gem and fleshed it out into a full-fledged, large ensemble chart featuring trumpeter Alex Norris; the result fits into the Mingus style due to his creative voicings, which build upon the late master's approach to writing. "The Clown" originally featured text written by Mingus and narrated by humorist and radio personality Jean Shepherd (who was most famous for authoring and narrating the film *A Christmas Story*). This fresh arrangement by Kozlov features new text written and spoken by Mingus' son Eric Mingus, and Robin Eubanks' expressive trombone licks backing him are the perfect complement.

For more info visit [candidrecords.com](http://candidrecords.com). Mingus Big Band is at *Birdland Nov. 19-23* and *Drom Nov. 6, 13 and 27*. See *Calendar*.



**Rivbea Live! Series, Volume 1:**  
**Live from Studio Rivbea - July 12, 1975**  
**Kalaparusha Maurice McIntyre (NoBusiness)**  
 by Pierre Crépon

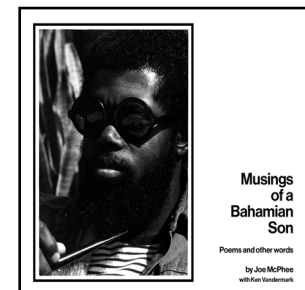
"If I wanted the world to recognize me, I had to come to a place that the world would come to. New York is the marketplace for any type of art," Kalaparusha Maurice McIntyre (who died eleven years ago this month at age 77) once told interviewer Fred Jung. "You come here if you have something to sell." Born in Arkansas and affiliated with Chicago's Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians (AACM) since its 1965 inception, the product the tenor saxophonist had to offer was of the avant garde kind. It was not an easy sell in 1970s New York. The city had more of this kind of goods than its marketplaces could (or even cared to) absorb, a reality that led to the multiplication of alternative loft spaces. One of the most renowned of these spaces was saxophonist Sam Rivers' Studio Rivbea, which was where this raw-sounding, previously unheard music was recorded in 1975. McIntyre, who was not a loft mainstay per se (even though he did appear on the first volume of the famed *Wildflowers Sessions*, recorded one year later, in 1976) was booked during a month-long summer festival that also featured saxophonists Byard Lancaster and Charles Tyler as well as vibraphonist-pianist Karl Berger and others.

McIntyre's music "was often confrontational and not at all conventionally attractive," Ed Hazell writes in his informative liner notes. This is an interesting starting point for an examination of the music. Conventional conceptions of beauty were far from absent of free jazz, but there's a gruffness to McIntyre's

playing that directs the music in an unknown direction: a rough, unstable edge that seems to be the center of gravity. He is joined by Malachi Thompson (trumpet), Alvin Fielder (drums) and Milton Suggs (electric bass), the latter whose contributions are certainly felt. The music combines moments of simultaneous soloing with traditional soloing patterns in an elastic mix that moves from sluggishness to urgency. The approach works well within the frameworks of the leader's compositions, which include three unidentified originals that share somber shadings found elsewhere in the saxophonist's work.

Overall, the players do not come across as trying to make a grandiose statement. This recording seems to document the kind of music making made consistently engaging by the quality of its instrumentalists. And though NoBusiness has prolifically released unearthed music by Rivers, it's an interesting choice by the label to inaugurate a series dedicated to a space (Rivers' Studio Rivbea), rather than to a musician.


For more info visit [nobusinessrecords.com](http://nobusinessrecords.com)




**Musings of a Bahamian Son:**  
**Poems and Other Words by Joe McPhee**  
**Joe McPhee (with Ken Vandermark)**  
 (Corbett vs. Dempsey)  
 by Sophia Valera Heinecke

While it represents a "stoic reflection of the masses," *Musings of a Bahamian Son: Poems and Other Words* by Joe McPhee is also an explosively joyous exploration of the elements and ecosystems that have shaped the work of Joe McPhee's life. The album encompasses 27 poems and is the first full-length release dedicated to the writings of the multi-instrumentalist (who is primarily known for his work on tenor and pocket trumpet, though also alto, soprano, valve trombone and flugelhorn). He is well respected as a legendary performer and sound artist, and his writing uniquely captures the immediacy of improvised music just as well as his playing.

Album opener, "Something", serves as a compass, guiding the listener to understand how music is perceived by the artist, and suggesting that we might think of listening as a "ritual long forgotten" and for it to be invited back. This directness, a refreshing quality that permeates much of the album, engages with an invitation to delve deeper into the music. McPhee's long-standing relationship with fellow multi-instrumentalist Ken Vandermark is enough to explain how music arrives as interludes between poems. Vandermark makes contributions on clarinet and bass clarinet, while McPhee supplies rich lines exclusively on soprano in addition to reciting his poetry. For the recording, McPhee performed his poems nonstop and without repetition (the musical interludes were inserted later). He also intentionally chose to proclaim the work's title at the start of each poem. The interludes are dissonant and mysterious, helping to build dramatic tension and counterbalance to the very direct nature of each poetic installment. Thematic pairings of tracks create a sense of connection. "Something" and "Invocation" both regard music as a great freedom if one is attentive enough to it. "Hat and Beard" (an Eric Dolphy and Thelonious Monk tribute) and the visceral "A Song for Beggars" each fill the listener with stories about the spectrum of humanity. "A Meeting



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**EYES TO THE SUN**

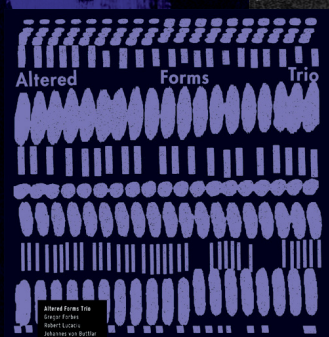
**CAMILA NEBBIA**  
tenor saxophone

**LEO GENOVESE**  
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**ALFRED VOGEL**  
drums

VINYL & DIGITAL

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