

Miłość & Lester Bowie - Not Two (1995)



01. *Smrt Maharihia* 02. *Plasm - Itch* 03. *Taniec Mikołaja* 04. *Orchilius* 05. *Here's the Olden Messaur* 06. *Chłopaki na damkach* 07. *Ordre Omnitonique* Lester Bowie – trumpet; Mikołaj Trzaska - alto & soprano saxophones; Ryszard Tymon Tymański - bass; Jacek Olter - drums; Lesław Możdżer - piano; Maciej Sikala - tenor saxophone.

Not Two is a rare document of one of the last recordings by revered jazz musician Lester Bowie, recorded live on the 19th of November 1997 at the Eskulap Club, Poznań Jazz Fair, Poznań, Poland. On this record Lester Bowie is joined by one of the best European jazz and experimental music bands of 1990s scene - MIŁOŚĆ. In around 1992, a unique scene began in Gdańsk, Poland and surrounding cities. 'Yass', as the scene came to be called, generally has its philosophic roots in the Vajrayana Buddhist faith. Mainly, these musicians focus on freeing music from categorization and on blurring genre definitions. These are stunning musicians, versatile, dexterous, and often full of humor. 'Yass' groups such as MIŁOŚĆ have collectively transformed virtually every tradition of jazz, from swing to free-jazz, and have mixed in punk, noise, and playful iconoclasm.

When I founded MIŁOŚĆ back in 1988, we had an experimental new wave group background and quite a collection of weird, far-out ideas designed to blast the conformist music world. We had already been into Zappa, Beefheart, Frith and Ives and had just recently discovered Coltrane, Dolphy Coleman, Ayler and the Art Ensemble of Chicago. We were a band of hot-heads around 20, who ostentatiously quit school and devoted themselves to playing and discussing music for days and nights on end. Boy, did we totally freak out when we heard that great, uncompromising, passionate music... These guys were to influence us strongly for half a decade until we worked out our own idiosyncratic Yass style involving free improvisation, rock expression, classical harmonies, ethnic rhythms & feeling and what have you... Up to December 1995 we issued two CD records of original material, having gained a cult reputation and a hard core audience mainly throughout Poland. Our music clearly appealed to improvised music fiends and punk rock fans, affecting the brainless and the sophisticated (neither the better).

Actually it's because that's the way we are, I believe; highly intellectual and deadly brainless at the same time.

No wonder I immediately began arranging a mental list of the likes of us, some uninhibited musicians who'd kind to suit our sane insanity, when our Poznań mate Piotr Nycz from the Eskulap club proposed that MIŁOŚĆ play in a sextet format with a chosen guest star. The date was to be at the Poznań Jazz Fair towards the end of 1994. Another friend of ours, Jarek Tylicki of the Colosseum Agency, by the way himself a Zappa & Dolphy fan, offered me this innocent suggestion, 'What about... Lester Bowie?'. Yeah, that was it - the best hit he could make, the best combination we could dream of. When I finally confronted Lester on the 17th of November 1994, as he and his entourage were heading for the club we were to rehearse at, I told him, 'You know it's not an accident that we are playing together tomorrow...'. 'What do you mean, man?' his eyes questioned. 'It's because the Art Ensemble and us are just a bunch of freaks', I continued, while Lester laughed and nodded his approval.

The concert playing was extremely good, also thanks to the audience. Lester Bowie turned out to be a warm, charismatic person and a superb, experienced musician whose ways were far above the traditional rules and regulations. With him it was easy to relax, it was all about relaxing. You cannot say that about our uptight, ego-neurotic, professor-like jazz scene leaders. When you play with him, the music just happens. If you're able to let it go and be open to whatever comes next, magic may come your way too. 'Free jazz is not what people call or think is free. It could be a melody a song or ballad, a free or bop thing, just anything. It's about free approach and that's misunderstood', he explained to us at the rehearsal. 'Let's follow the music - it will be all clear'. And I think we did it that way with great assistance on the part of Lester who danced around with his trumpet, his lab coat waving, his eyes half-closed, his energy never demanding or disturbing, always ready to help the music flow intervening when necessary. 'When you really play you forget yourself and the ego disappears. The music cannot be controlled', he commented after the concert, visibly content with what we'd done together. We were even more than this, hoping it wasn't the last time we meet and it wasn't; as soon as in January 1996 the same sextet is to play a regular tour around Poland. C'mon, you don't really have to read all this. It's enough if you only listen to this recording of a live performance of ours which speaks for itself - music always does. Feel free to enter its magic yet not virtual reality in which lives meet, energies coalesce, worlds and music blend... All being just one, not two. --- culture.pl

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Poniedziałek, 30 Styczeń 2017 18:01 -

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