



## Saxophonist Ivo Perelman Releases a Series of Seven Albums Documenting His Final Collaboration with Pianist Matthew Shipp on *The Art of Perelman-Shipp*

### The Seven Volumes Focus on the Astrological Return of Saturn and Its Effect on Their Creative and Musical Output

The passionately ingenious Brazilian tenor saxophonist **Ivo Perelman** enjoys a unique partnership with the brilliantly eclectic pianist **Matthew Shipp** that stretches back more than two decades and encompasses more than 30 recordings. These document the ever-expanding extent of their seemingly mystical connection. Now, in their most ambitious project to date, Perelman and Shipp present *The Art Of Perelman-Shipp*, a series of seven discs (released simultaneously), all centered around the core of their collaborative formats--the saxophone-piano duo that constitutes a binary star system all its own.

These artistic soul mates engage in a musical communication that calls to mind the greatest partnerships in improvised music: Parker and Gillespie, Brubeck and Desmond, Coltrane and Tyner. As Neil Tesser, who annotated all seven discs, writes: "At this juncture, and especially in the duo format, they each can anticipate the other's responses. A connection exists that some would call telepathy or even clairvoyance. Not only do they finish each other's sentences; they also start them." But not even Coltrane and Tyner approached each performance in the way of Perelman and Shipp, who walk into the studio without any preconceived plan--no written theme, no harmonic schemes, no outline of the events that will take place--and simply start to play, allowing the music to go where it will and trusting their shared history to guide the proceedings.

The closeness of their relationship is only intensified by the timing of their births: each celebrated his 56<sup>th</sup> birthday within weeks of New Year's Day 2017. This coincidence factors heavily into *The Art Of Perelman-Shipp*, as both musicians have begun to explore the astronomical phenomenon--with astrological implications--known as the Saturn Return.

The Saturn Return refers to the reappearance of the planet Saturn in the same part of Earth's sky roughly every 29.5 years--the time it takes the ringed planet to orbit the sun. Astrology suggests that each return presages a major passage in one's life, and that this period of transition occurs gradually in the years leading up to the planet's "return." (The albums feature an accompanying essay by astrologer Chris Flisher that explains this event in greater detail.) Perelman says that he has already noted the influence of the Saturn Return--which he had not previously considered--on the music he and Shipp recorded for this project. "As we are starting to enter this phase," he explains, "I can feel its power on my daily life, and on my music life; and speaking to Matt, he also feels the same. There's a synergy as we both experience this. Both of our Saturns are amplifying each other, and everything is opening up--my practicing, the music, the way I hear, the sounds, the colors."

Perelman has mirrored the influence of Saturn in the very design of this project, and in his choice of titles for each volume. The series has at its center the Perelman-Shipp Duo, which performs alone on the album named **Saturn** (Volume 6 in the series). Just as the planet Saturn's massive gravitational pull keeps dozens of moons in orbit, the album *Saturn* provides a home world for the other albums in this release. Each of the other albums expands upon the duo by adding bass and/or drums to form either a trio or a quartet; and each of these albums bears the name of a different Saturnian satellite. In Perelman's words, "*Saturn* is the main piece, surrounded by the other volumes, which are our 'moons.' It's not that the other combinations are weaker or not as good. It's just that the gravity, the magnetic attraction, between Matthew and me is very strong. It is the core of everything."

On Volume 1, Perelman and Shipp welcome bassist **William Parker**, recreating the trio that first played together on Perelman's 1996 album *Cama De Terra*. Parker's participation prompted Perelman to title the album after the largest of Saturn's moons, **Titan**: "I like the name and what it evokes, because William is like a titanic figure playing the bass; the man is a giant. . . . [But] his presence is not threatening; he's a poet." Parker also plays on Volume 3, **Pandora**, which with

the exception of Perelman himself, reunites the visionary quartet led in the early 1990s by tenor saxist David S. Ware, who died in 2012. That group featured not only Parker but also Shipp, as well the drummer on *Pandora*, **Whit Dickey**, and their work in that band provided a ready springboard for Perelman. "They're so used to playing together from those days, it made the session very special, very powerful," Perelman remarks. "I was able to plug into a pre-existing energy."

On the other quartet album in this series, *Rhea* (Volume 5), Parker is replaced by another longtime Perelman associate, bassist **Michael Bisio**, resulting in a markedly different, more aggressive group esthetic. In addition to being one of the "moons" in *The Art Of Perelman-Shipp*, this quartet has "a life of its own, because we have recorded three times earlier with this personnel," Perelman points out. "But the thing is, they all sound very different from each other; you can hear the evolution." Volume 4, titled *Hyperion*, features a trio drawn from this quartet--sax, piano, and bass--that has recorded another three albums separately, and thus also has "a life of its own." On this volume, Perelman makes especially good use of the tenor saxophone's *altissimo* octaves (the notes above the written range of the instrument), which fits the name Hyperion, translated from the Greek as "the one above."

Two more trio albums constitute the remaining members of *The Art Of Perelman-Shipp's* planetary system, each of them adding a legendary drummer to the duo. *Tarvos*, Volume 2 in the series, finds them in the company of the septuagenarian drummer **Bobby Kapp**, who has worked with Shipp in the recent past; this represents his first encounter with Perelman. "There is an exuberance, an effervescence, a happiness about his playing. And he's very knowledgeable about Latin rhythms--so he's dancing at the drum kit. He's the closest to my ideal drummer, which is a free-thinking drummer that understands music *and* dance *and* Latin rhythms," says Perelman. "In other words, I could never find the 'Ivo Perelman' on drums. But Bobby Kapp, he plays like that."

And on *Dione* (Volume 7), Perelman and Shipp welcome into their orbit the 77-year-old **Andrew Cyrille**--one of the true pioneers of free-jazz drummers, thanks to his work in Cecil Taylor's bands of the 1960s and 70's. "His drumming carries a weight that's impossible to disregard," says Perelman, calling him "the epitome of the great free-jazz drummers. Anything you do, he will amplify it to make it sound bigger, better, more subtle, stronger, louder--he can take anything and improve on it. And on *Dione*, he actually did something miraculous. He infused a certain energy and quality in the session that changed enormously my interaction with Matt." Throughout the session, Cyrille surreptitiously impacts the interaction between the two principals, pushing and pulling with such subtlety that not even Perelman can fully pinpoint the process.

If music is the most abstract of the arts; and jazz the most abstract of music genres--and free improvisation the most abstract of jazz idioms--then this music should simply spin off into space. And yet there's nothing ethereal about these recordings. Just the opposite: they have structure and purpose that belie the total spontaneity that informs them. Rather than wisps of smoke, the music of the Perelman-Shipp Duo has always bristled with flesh and bone. In *The Art Of Perelman-Shipp*, they introduce a new ingredient: stardust, the elemental material that gives rise to all the rest.

**Ivo Perelman · *The Art Of Perelman-Shipp* (7 Volumes)**

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