

Robert Dick: Third Stone From The Sun
New World 80435-2

This music represents a statement I have long dreamed of making. Like many people, musicians and nonmusicians alike, I've been inspired, provoked, moved, and challenged by the work of Jimi Hendrix. Thinking back over everything I have ever listened to, it is Hendrix's music that I've spent the most time with. For years, I listened to Jimi religiously every day, tuning in to his emotional outpouring and his miraculous freedom of sound. He seemed to be able to do anything, create any sound, any feeling. Jimi's sonic freedom, his personal virtuosity and complete connection to his instrument, was immeasurably inspiring.

The existence of Hendrix's sound-world, with its ever-fulfilled promise that every new cut would contain at least one never-before-heard sound, that every improvisation would go to at least one new place and have at least one totally new heartstopping lick was a wellspring of affirmation for me as I slowly built my own soundworld. In the 1970s I was spending countless hours experimenting with the flute and discovered thousands of new sounds. They were (and are) not so easy to play, and it was clear that years of work were in the offing.

The traditional limitations of the flute—playing only single, chromatic notes with a more or less "sweet" quality—had become unbearable. The founding principle of a new sound-world is the concept of continuous transformation. Many musicians of my generation, furthermore, share a belief that any instrument can perform any musical role. Fueled by study of electronic music, world music, and John Cage's aesthetic that anything can be heard as music (no guarantee that it will always be "good" music, though), I formed my concepts of the flute. One of the earliest disappointments was that electronics, especially effects boxes and pedals, simply did not work with the flute. They made it sound like a kazoo. The electric guitar is an instrument mated to electronics. For the flute, air molecules flow as life blood, and it was clear that the flute's acoustic sound held the answer. Chords, slides, colors, drum and bass sounds—all had to be created acoustically. There are no electronically altered flute sounds on this recording.

It has taken quite a while for me to get to Hendrix. I had to create a sound-world extensive enough so that the flute could speak his language, and speak it spontaneously. It is truly a joy to have reached this place. It means a great deal to me to be able to express the feelings that have grown from his music, the most important taproot of my aesthetic.

A lot of musicians are playing Hendrix's music these days, a most positive sign indeed. I think we have needed time to get to Hendrix in our own ways and to sort out our thoughts and feelings about Jimi as a social as well as a musical phenomenon. I have spoken of aspects of Jimi that I love; there are things I hate, too. Watching Jimi trash a guitar is truly painful. I destroyed a cheap flute once at a party (a flutists' party) for the shock value and to see what it would feel like. While it was momentarily liberating from the discipline of handling the flute—good flutes are delicate, handmade, and require loving, knowledgeable care at all times and cost many tens of the guitar's price—I felt stupid afterward. The destruction connection is not right for me.

Jimi's death must be grappled with, the ultimate act and symbol of his destructiveness. Does making music that is maximally intense lead one to, and over, the edge? If we don't go over that edge, are we less?

Ultimately, coming to terms with this complexity is necessary and more meaningful than judging. While I grieve over Jimi's foreshortened life (is that in itself a judgment?) and for his unmade music (or might he have become deaf?), it is the life burning in his music that is important to me. And it is that life that has kept the music meaningful as generations pass.

The program begins with Jimi's classic "space music" tune "Third Stone From The Sun" from the album "Are You Experienced?". We have interpreted the multi-tracked, slowed down vocals of the original by making a duet between Shelley Hirsch's voice (the dissatisfied "alien" looking at the Earth and us) and an overdubbed bass flute track where I talk through the flute, among other things. Thanks to Dave Soldier for the arrangement.

"Greenhouse" is a blues that is directly descended from Hendrix's "Red House." This is perhaps the most pure "flute as guitar" statement here. In the tradition of blues tributes, I quote Jimi's introduction and then improvise the rest.

Miles Davis referred to Hendrix as one of the great modal improvisors, and "Pali Gap", a beautiful instrumental from the "Rainbow Bridge" album certainly proves the point. Without really having a theme, per se, Hendrix's melody constantly evolves and moves through several gripping climaxes. Some fifteen years ago, the flutist Keith Underwood and I gave a concert of Jimi's music interpreted with two flutes, and Keith prepared the transcription of "Pali Gap" that I used as my departure point for this version. Thanks also to Jerome Harris and Jim Black for the beautiful setting they created.

"It's Still Like It Wouldn't Be Yesterday" is an episodic work for overdubbed flutes. It begins with four concert flutes playing whisper-tones, gossamer-like harmonics. Then, two contrabass flutes in F take over, followed by whisper-tones from four flutes and a final section with an F bass flute playing "bass" under an alto flute, two flutes and two piccolos. Jimi's atmospheric pieces, such as his studio "Star Spangled Banner" from "Rainbow Bridge" (Charles Ives would have danced if he could have heard it) or the extended instrumental jamming on "Moon, Turn The Tides... gently, gently, away" or "Electric Ladyland" are the inspiration here. "It's Still Like It Wouldn't Be Yesterday" doesn't sound like anything Jimi ever did, but I feel its spiritual paternity is clean. Thanks to Marty Ehrlich and James Farber for helping me create this in the studio.

I composed "Tycho" together with Dave Soldier. Using the guitar coda of "Castles Made of Sand", from the album "Axis: Bold As Love" in a totally transfigured way, we journey from hard-core to the Latin "montuno", or bass ostinato. The Soldier String Quartet uses "Rats", distortion devices along with bobby pins and the like in a polyrhythmic section. Too bad there were no photographers present the first time I was asked "You want rats or not?" Solos by Jim Black and Laura Seaton are featured in "Tycho".

"Purple Haze" is Hendrix's best known song and like many others I have used it as a touchstone. This arrangement always involves extensive improvisation. And finally, "Voodoo Child (Slight Return)", "the apotheosis of the blues" in Dave Soldier's words. Our take on this tune is to stress its Delta spirit. I play Hendrix's first solo on the concert flute, then later improvise a solo on the open-hole bass flute, a new instrument that Eva

Kingma in Holland and I have collaborated on developing. Jerome Harris contributes an electric bass solo.

When Jimi was a guest on the Dick Cavett Show after his famous "Star-Spangled Banner" performance at Woodstock, Cavett asked if he was aware of all the people he had angered for desecrating the national anthem. "I thought it was beautiful", Jimi said. And it was/is.

Deepest thanks to all who participated on this record. At every step of the way kindred souls contributed uniquely. —Robert Dick

SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

Ladder 5 of Escape, Robert Dick, Attaca Babel 9158.

Steel and Bamboo, Robert Dick and Steve Gorn, O.O. Discs, #12.

Tambastics, Tambastics, Music and Arts CD-704

The Cliff, New Winds, Sound Aspects 025.

The Other Flute, Robert Dick, GM Records 2013CD.

Traction, New Winds, Sound Aspects 044.

Venturi Shadows, Robert Dick, O.O. Discs, #7.

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Dick, Robert. "Circular Breathing for the Flutist", Multiple Breath Music Co., 1987.

— "Flying Lessons: Contemporary Concert Etudes for Flute." Volume I and II, Multiple Breath, 1983 and 1987.

— "The Other Flute—A Performance Manual of Contemporary Techniques, 2nd Edition." Multiple Breath, 1989.

— "Tone Development Through Extended Techniques, revised Edition", Multiple Breath, 1986.

Robert Dick is a graduate of the Yale School of Music, where he studied composition with Robert Morris. His career embraces improvising, composing and concepts of the flute itself. He plays a wide range of flutes, from the piccolo down through the concert flute, alto, bass, and F contrabass flute. Along with creating a unique sound-world for flutes, he collaborates with the flutemaker Eva Kingma to develop new instruments. Robert Dick is a member of the cooperative groups New Winds and Tambastics, and has played with Steve Lacy, Richard Teitelbaum, Even Parker, George Lewis, Bobby Naughton, James Emery, John Zorn, Marty Ehrlich and many others. He has received grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, the New York State Council on the Arts, the New York Foundation for the Arts, the Fromm Music Foundation and the Guggenheim Foundation.

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Executive producer: Arthur Moorhead

Engineer: James Farber

Assistant engineer: Fred Kevorkian

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Tycho published by Multiple Breath, BMI and Rigglus Music, ASCAP.

Robert Dick—flute, alto flute, bass flute, F contrabass flute, A flat piccolo

Jerome Harris—bass guitar, acoustic bass guitar, acoustic guitar

Jim Black—drums

The Soldier String Quartet:

Laura Seaton-violin, solo on *Tycho*

Dave Soldier-violin

Ron Lawrence-violola

Mary Wooten-cello

On *Third Stone From The Sun*:

Shelley Hirsch, voice

Marty Ehrlich, bass clarinet

1. Third Stone From The Sun (Jimi Hendrix) Arranged by Dave Soldier

2. Greenhouse (Robert Dick)

3. Pali Gap (Jimi Hendrix) Arranged by Dick, Underwood, Harris & Black

4. It's Still Like It Wouldn't Be Yesterday (Robert Dick)

5. Tycho (Robert Dick and Dave Soldier)

6. Purple Haze (Jimi Hendrix)

7. Voodoo Child (Slight Return) (Jimi Hendrix) Arranged by Dave Soldier

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