



HELLO WORLD!
the **SONNY SIMMONS**
homepage

C'EST LA VIE...

the Sonny Simmons story

Sonny Simmons made a number of striking albums in the 60's. Born in **1933**, he was already a well-travelled Parkerian and a signaled innovator on the West Coast when he first came to national attention in **1963** with his **debut recording *The Cry!*** (with the Prince Lasha Quintet, on Contemporary), live appearances in NYC with **Sonny Rollins**, and **sessions with Eric Dolphy** (for whom he wrote the standard, *Music Matador*) and Coltrane's rhythm section (*Illumination!*, on Impulse).

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Though not a die-hard avant-gardist (like Ornette Coleman and Jimmy Lyons, other alto sax luminaries from the same generation, he sticks in his own provocative way to the tradition), **he was then a leading figure of the Free Jazz scene in NYC with his wife Barbara Donald**, cutting legendary records for ESP in 1966, *Staying On The Watch* and *Music From The Spheres*. Back in California, he made an acclaimed appearance at the Jazz Symposium in Berkeley (1969). He became an underground hero with the likes of Bert Wilson, James Zitro, Smiley Winters and producer James Bronson Jr. The period also provided **landmark records for Arhoolie (*Manhattan Egos*) and Contemporary (*Firebirds, Rumasuma, Burning Spirits*)**, which met international response.

Then - nothing. Sonny Simmons suffered a spectacular eclipse during the 70's and the 80's. With the West Coast no longer providing work, family and personal problems, his career collapsed.

He ended up in the streets. Playing kept him alive

and he managed to maintain working groups throughout most of this "lost period", producing hours of incredible music (which are still to be

released : check out the rare documented traces of this activity, *Backwoods Suite, Global Jungle* and the solo *tour-de-force, Jewels*, to make sure his musical powers remained untouched).

Accordingly, his come-back had to be spectacular, too. He began to build a local reputation again. Word-of-mouth, helping souls and hard work made the rest : by the time he went to Europe (1994), he had an album on Warner, ***Ancient Ritual***. Actually, the title he had first chosen says it all : *Reincarnation*. He made a strong impression in **festivals (Montreal, Moers, Willisau, Helsinki...)**, on record (***American Jungle***, Warner, *Judgement Day*, CIMP), appeared at the Irridium, at the Knitting Factory.

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With his *alter-ego* **Michael Marcus**, he founded **the Cosmosamatics**, a group with which he enjoys the greatest of achievements. Hugely popular in Europe, where they tour frequently, they have recorded seven albums (most notably for Boxholder, Soul Note and Not Two), building **one of the most distinctive sound nowadays**.

Besides, he led varied projects of his own, ranging from a classy quintet date for Marge, *Myxolydis*, to a mammoth sextet with Anthony Braxton and another group, the Renegade Society, both resurrecting the "ol' free jazz" feel. Many gems pave his new way : a second **solo tapestry (*Out Into The Andromeda*)**, a magical evocation of the powers of **eastern musical idioms (*Tales Of The Ancient East*)**, an up-to-date **association with noise wizzard Jeff Shurdut (*The Future Is Ancient*)**, and an **atmospheric masterpiece full of strings, scorching alto lines and sunsets (*The Traveller*)**. The latter association with Jazzaway records proved very fruitful, since three more records are to be released in the forthcoming months. - And now Sonny Simmons is back in NYC with his own performing outfit, **the ZQ3 Trio!**

Sonny Simmons looks back and forward with confidence.

The Cosmosamatics :

The Cosmosamatics , Boxholder, 20 01
Cosmosamatics II , Boxholder, 2002
Live At Banlieues Bleues , Bleu Reg ard, 2003
Three , Boxholder, 2004
Reeds & Birds , No t Two , 2004
Zetrons , No t Two, 2005

With Horace Tapscott t :

Among Fr iends , Jazz Fr iends Productions, 199 9

With Jeffr ey Hayden Shurdut :

The Future Is Ancient , No Label, 2 004
Zebulon 1 , No Label, 2 005

With Ant hony Braxton :

Antho ny Braxton, Sonny Simmons, Brandon
Evans, A ndre Vida, Sha nir Blumenkranz, Mike
Pride Sextet, Parallactic , 2003

With Bran don Evans :

Universal Prayer/Survival Skil ls, Parallactic, 1999
Renegade Society, Live in S.F. 1993 , Parallactic,
2001
A Salu te To Ustad Bi smillah Khan, Parallactic,
2001
Duo 2002 , Parallactic, 2002
Renegade Society NYC 2002 , Parallactic, 2002
La Société de Renégat , Parallactic, 2002

The Son ny Sim mons Archi ves P roject :

A True Life Drama, HW!, 2005
Live A t Rive De Gier , HW!, 20 06
Live At The Cheshire C at, HW!, 200 6

, To uché, 1972

Variou s :

Soundtrac k for François Lunel's Jours Tranq uilles A
Sarajevo , Promenades Films, 2003

Sonny Simmons i nspired three do cumentary films,
The Mul tiple X-Rated Truth (B. Eva ns, 2002),
Together Wi th So nny Simmons (F. Lunel, 2002),
In Modern Time (R. Brewster, 2004)

With Bert Wilson :

Xmas With Uncle So nny , FMO, 200 4
Kozmic Co mmu nicat ion , FMO, 2005
The Mys tic Rites Of Sound , FMO, 2005
Palo Colorado Suite, FMO, 2005
Expanded Universe , FMO, 2005

For any in formati on r egardin g Son ny Si mmon s' pr ofession al activities, booki ng an d/or
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Check the Sonny Simmons au thori zed homepa ge at www.sonny-simmons.org.

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