

The Ghost Dog Tour Compilation

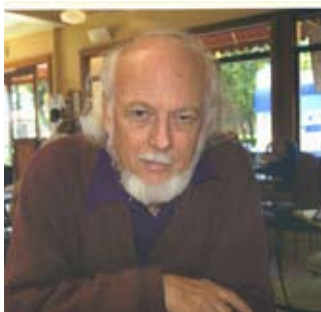
CD Notes and Narrative to a Musical Bus Trip



I got on the bus in Oakland, California on May 24, 2007 at 1:30 in the afternoon, heading for the Twin Cities in Minnesota where I was to meet Dan Godston and Joel Wanek who were coming in from Chicago. Our first gig was at the Black Dog Café in St. Paul's 'lower town.' Because Dan had lined up the gig the name of the band was his call. He called us the 'Stir Trio.' I asked him why but received no official reply. I digress. My arrival at the Black Dog was still fifty-two hours in the future.

In 1997 Jim Ryan launched his Avant-Garde jazz group *Forward Energy* which has been performing regularly in the San Francisco Bay Area and across the country with a constantly varying cast of players. Five CDs by the group have been released on Edgetone Records and one on Cadence Jazz Records. Jim has also participated in Marco Eneidi's "American Jungle Orchestra," and Eddie Gale's "Orchestra for World Peace." During May and June of 2007 he traveled the United States by bus, hooking up with musicians in six cities from St. Paul and Minneapolis to New York City; playing eleven gigs, while discovering an underground vein of creative music running across the nation. In November of 2007 embarked on a tour of Southern California, playing with musicians from San Diego and the Los Angeles area under the Forward Energy banner. In December he travelled to Portland and Seattle to work with musicians in the Northwest. During February and March 2008 he is revisiting the Twin Cities, The Krannet Art Museum in Champaign, Il, and Chicago's Velvet Lounge.

Jim was born in St. Paul, Minnesota and began listening to swing and bebop music at about age fifteen. Other than early piano lessons under the nuns, his first instrument was the trombone. His major influences at that time were Lester Young, Theolonious Monk, Charlie Parker, and Sonny Rollins.



His college years took him away from playing music but, nearing his mid-30's, and living in Paris, France, he picked up the flute in 1968. Shortly thereafter he acquired a c-melody sax. He was influenced by the burgeoning 'Free Jazz' style which became popular import to France, and he was inspired by such 'free' players as Ornette Coleman, Albert Ayler, Cecil Taylor, and Frank Wright. In the early '70s he participated in a yearlong workshop organized and led by the late great soprano saxophonist Steve Lacy. Jim founded the "Free Music Formation" at this time and performed in Paris and other European cities.

We rolled into Sacramento around mid-afternoon, and hit Reno in the early evening: not much going on in the nice, clean station, just a few forlorn slot machines and driver games sitting there winking and blinking. Outside, the area about the terminal entrance was wreathed in noxious smoke but as I moved away the air was light and moist and the young leaves on the small trees around the bus station seemed to lift themselves up to welcome the tender raindrops of a gentle shower.

It was a long night across Nevada and quite light again when the old, grey dog lumbered into Salt Lake City. A new bus and driver; and we were moving over the highlands of Wyoming and I found myself without my plain blue-billed cap which had become an inseparable companion, never failing to shade my eyes from the glare of outside reality. Must have left it in a restroom. In Rock Springs, WY, I checked the hats at the Western Outfitter next to the burger place but twenty bucks for a billed cap made it less indispensable. But not long before Laramie we stopped at one of those two-for-one-and-a-half-we-sell-everything-from-nitroglycerin-to-teddybears, and I knew this was the place. I found the hat rack but all the caps had unacceptable writings embroidered on them. I looked and looked, and finally found one that said, "PSYCHE WARD." I could have gotten two for seven-fifty but there were no other

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He returned to the United States in 1975 and settled in Washington, D.C. where he formed the 'Art Performance Group' in 1979. At present he lives in Oakland, California and performs and records regularly as saxophonist, flutist, and spoken word artist with his band *Forward Energy*. His recordings (including his non-jazz ensemble, The Left Coast Improv Group) can be found on Edgetone Records www.edgetonerecords.com/ryan.html more info at myspace.com/forwardenergy



clichés I could stomach. So, I got back on the bus. It was getting late on Friday afternoon and I'd been on this thing for nearly thirty hours as we approached Denver, and I began to understand that I was now wearing a cap appropriate to my condition. This really wasn't a whole hellofa lot of fun.

In Denver it was not only a change of buses but a change of lines . . . It didn't look good. There were TV screens hanging down in front of our faces on this new bus, and advertisements for the good things were flashing in psychedelic colors and rock-blast-

ing sound like force feeding or sensory rape. My God, I thought, I am surely in the coo-coo's nest . . . I certainly chose the correct hat . . . but will I be able to survive? . . . how long will I be able to take it? . . . why do my fellow passengers not seem horrified . . . will I tell them whatever they want to hear? . . . who, what, where, when.

We were leaving Denver behind, the Nebraska plains stretching before us, heading east, clouds piling high in the north, sun setting behind us, waves of corn flowing beside us when the movie came on. It was about good doggies in Antarctica, sled doggies, huskies, I believe. The volume coming out of the speakers was intense. I was two thirds of the way back in the bus. I got up and made my way to the driver. "Must we endure this abuse," I asked him. He replied in pontifical voice, "If one passenger complains I have to turn it off. . . (a note about long-distance bus drivers. They are captains of their ship

and of a special breed; a cross between a failed comic and a Gestapo sergeant) ". . . and that one must deal with the other passengers," he concluded. "I'm complaining," I said. The driver leaned forward and slightly toward the right, reaching into a well-kept garden of switches and knobs. The speakers went silent, the screens blank. As I made my way back towards my seat loud shouts and imprecations broke out, "Nasty Old Man," "Scrooge!" "Spoil Sport!" "Dirty Bastard!" I regained my seat with a sense of empowerment and release from the dull inactivity of the past thirty hours. Eerie light flashed in the clouds.

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The Ghost Dog Tour Compilation 5&6/2007 • EDT 4063 TT:73m58s

- Black Dog Café St. Paul MN** • Stir Trio ☎1m43s • 5/26/07
Dan Godston tmpt/perc Joel Wanek dblbass Jim Ryan sax
- Center for Independent Artists** • Mpls MN ☎7m12s • 5/27/07
Douglas R. Ewart digeridoo/perc Mankwe Ndosi voice
Dan Godston tmpt/perc Joel Wanek db Jim Ryan flute
- Clown Lounge St. Paul** • Stir Trio ☎7m18s • 5/28/07
Dan Godston tmpt/perc Joel Wanek db Jim Ryan sax/word
- Acadia Café Minneapolis MN** • **Forward Energy** ☎6m34s • 5/29/07
J. Otis Powell word Jim Ryan sax Dan Godston trumpet/percussion
Joel Wanek db Steve Hirsh drums
- Velvet Lounge Chicago IL** • Forward Energy ☎6m6s • 5/31/07
J. Ryan sax D. Godston tmpt/perc J. Wanek db Jerome Bryerton d
- Mercury Café - Chicago IL** • Stir Quartet ☎5m9s • 6/01/07
D. Godston tmpt/perc J. Wanek db J. Ryan sax/word J. Bryerton perc
- Iron Post Urbana IL** • Nu Orbit Ensemble ☎4m17s • 6/04/07
Jason Finkleman perc Jay Eychaner synth
Tom Paynter keys/flute Jim Ryan sax (guest)
- Milo Elektrik Columbus OH** • Collective ☎8m50s • 6/06/07
Gerard Cox Fender Rhodes Hasan Rrazzaq alto sax Owen Kelly gtr
Andy Meyer alto sax Ryan Jewel drums J. Ryan flute/tsax
- Downtown Music Gallery NYC NY** • Forward Energy ☎3m34s • 6/10/07
J. Ryan alto sax Bruce Eisenbeil a-guitar Lisle Ellis dbass
- Jimmy's Back Room NYC NY** • Forward Energy ☎9m10s • 6/10/07
J. Ryan sax Dave Sewelson bari sax L. Ellis dbass
B. Eisenbeil e-guitar Dee Pop drums
- ABC No Rio NYC** • Forward Energy & Collective ☎14m01s • 6/17/07
A. Forward Energy J. Ryan sax/word D. Sewelson bsax Dave Hofstra db
B. C.O.M.A. Collective = Blaise Siwula saxes J. Ryan tenor sax Robyn Siwula violin D. Sewelson barisax Marcus Cummins spsax Chris Welcome gtr Jeffrey Shurdut p Tom Zlabinger db Brian Osborne drums

A narrative of Jim Ryan's Ghost Dog Tour as well as notes and photos on all the players can be downloaded free in PDF format www.edgetonerecords.com/ryan.html after 1/15/08. I wish to thank all the people who played and helped to make this a wonderful experience for me . . . not only was all of the music improvised but also all the travel, sleeping, and other survival arrangements. The PDF document is my opportunity to specifically thank all the great people who made this project work.

EDGETONE RECORDS
THE JAZZ GHOST BY THE EDGE OF TOWN



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The Ghost Dog Tour • EDT 4063

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An enormous African-American male rose up in the aisle near the front of the bus and asked if I would allow the movie to continue at reduced volume. Becoming uncomfortable with the hostility directed toward me from all angles, I agreed. The good doggies were saving the tenderfoot scientist for the second time; pulling him from a crevice in which he had got himself lodged (the first time he'd broken through the snow crust). The driver came on the intercom and said all should thank me for allowing the movie to continue. "I'll thank the S.O.B. for EVERYBODY!" shouted a woman across the aisle. A black and white lightshow played in the billowing clouds of the now-dark northern skies. The lives and stories and dreams of the Oglala and Lakota Sioux were being replayed in the heavens -- hunting the bison, war dances, the nomadic lives of a free native people . . . and then the ghost dance, all eventually destroyed by pale, foreign greed that continues to ravage the earth today. Meanwhile in fantasy land the good doggies were busy saving the inept scientist yet a third time (he'd slipped off the edge of a cliff and was dangling from a rope). I looked into the sky and seemed to see glints of red in the clouds. They grew brighter, swooping down from the north towards the highway. Nobody noticed. Everybody was absorbed in the fantasy playing on the screens before their blank, slack-jawed faces. But as the red lights came closer I saw that they were the eyes of a large black dog who approached the bus and ran or flew along beside it. He was a Lakota dog and told me that my music could help restore life to the great plains and to the communities struggling to survive in a land debased by lust for money and power . . . a land that turned human beings into automatons and zombies. He said he was the ghost of the hope for human decency and that I was on The Ghost Dog Tour! And he disappeared back up into the clouds like a Black Elk vision.



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Dan Godston teaches, writes, composes music and plays the trumpet and other instruments in Chicago. Last year his trio – Ways & Means – released their debut CD, entitled *Fire of Dream*. This recording features a collaboration with the amazing poet Ed Roberson. From 2005 till 2006 The Ways & Means Trio hosted a series at Muse Café called Lower & Upper Limits, showcasing collaborations of poets and musicians. Dan has worked with Jim Ryan, Daniele Cavallanti, Tiziano Tononi, Joel Wanek, Jerome Bryerton, Alex Wing, Mankwe Ndosi, Douglas Ewart, Paul Hartsaw, Mars Williams, Ben Boye, and many other musicians.

Meanwhile the scientist had made his great Antarctic discovery and returned to base camp just as a big storm was brewing . . . so the people had to hop in the plane and take off quick leaving the doggies all chained up in the snow. But the resourceful canids broke their chains and learned how to hunt birds and fish. Thus, they were able to survive for months. They were good, kind doggies too, even dropping a bird or fish at the head of poor, sick, old doggie who could no longer hunt. The President really liked the scientist's discovery (whatever it was) and gave him a lot of taxpayer's money, a big official party, and a huge medal. "Now you go back and save those doggies," demanded the scientist's wife. "You owe them, I'll come with you," she said. So, it was a kiss-kiss-kiss happy ending with everyone surviving; even poor, old, sick doggie who couldn't hunt. Not like the men, women, and children of the Plains who were slaughtered like the bison, or decimated by the pale folks' gift of small pox, with the few survivors herded into concentration camps called 'reservations.'

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Joel Wanek is a photographer, educator, and musician living and working in Chicago. He is a member of Tatsu Aoki's Miyumi Project Big Band and David Boykin's Microcosmic Sound Orchestra. Other frequent collaborators include Nicole Mitchell, Josh Abrams, Ed Roberson, Daniele Cavallanti and Tiziano Tononi. He is active as a music presenter, and is director of the Low End Theory Festival; an annual celebration of Chicago's finest creative bassists. www.joelwanek.com

Dan, Jim, and Joel constituted the core of the six gigs played in the Twin Cities and Chicago, whether under the name "**Stir Trio/Quartet**," or "**Forward Energy**."

JOEL WANEK



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Dawn was gray and raining when we arrived in Omaha for a change of bus and bus lines around 5:30 AM before heading up to Sioux Falls, South Dakota. As we pulled out I jotted down the poem you see to the right. Sioux Falls was the final bus change, the start of the last, seven-hour leg of my journey across Minnesota to Minneapolis.

But the gig was at the Black Dog Cafe in Lower Town, St. Paul. I found a city bus and clambered on with my two saxophones, back pack, shoulder bag and big-assed wheelee suitcase. I got off near the northwest corner of the empty farmers' market place. I could see people sitting at the cafe down the block. It was a balmy late May sunny Saturday afternoon and I was an hour and a half early for my first gig ever in my old home town. I had known Dan when he was a Master's English major at Mills College in Oakland. He'd been active creating and organizing a poetry reading series in which I participated at the college. I had no idea that he played trumpet on the Chicago improv/experimental music scene. But when he found out that I was making a trip to the Midwest he lined up three gigs. So, here I was in a solid, old building with hardwood floors waiting for the other members of the 'Stir Trio' to show up.

Dan, Joel and I felt each other out and laid some pretty nice music down. A high-school class mate and his wife showed up and we chatted between sets. All was well, even though I had no idea where I was going to sleep during my four days in the Twin Cities. But drummer Steve Hirsh introduced himself after the gig and suggested we go jam at his place on the west side. So, it quickly developed that I had a place to stay. J. Otis Powell, a jazz poet and doer or Art things also joined us for a nice session at Steve's. Dan and Joel were staying with relatives in the near suburbs. Everything was cool! The next night we were in Minneapolis at the Center for Independent Artists (CIA) adding guest performers Mankwe Ndosi and Douglas Ewart to the 'Stir Trio.' The second excerpt on the Ghost Dog CD presents this group with Douglas playing the finest digiridoo I have ever heard, and Mankwe providing provocative improvised words and vocals. The blend of the group works well with all of the musicians attentive to the overall sound.



MANKWE NDOSI

Mankwe Ndosi is a poet and vocalist of both improvised and composed works. Her family is from Tanzania, St. Louis and Chicago. She is deeply involved in the Minneapolis art world. She has worked for more than ten years to weave together the mediums of theater, dance, music and spoken word. Her first love is the 1st instrument, the voice, from which "all other music flows."

Perhaps best known as a composer, improviser, sculptor and maker of masks and instruments, Douglas R. Ewart is also an educator, lecturer, arts organization consultant and all around visionary. Born in Kingston, Jamaica in 1946, Douglas R. Ewart immigrated to Chicago in 1963. His world travels have convinced him that all peoples are interdependent. This has led him to respect and study the music and art of other cultures. He received a grant to study Japanese culture. And here on this recording he shows mastery of the digiridoo.

You can't get there any more
Not from here
Once you could
But not any more
Now you'd have to start
from somewhere else . . .
from a clean town
like Omaha in the early morning
and the sky is grey
when it's just getting light . . .
tires hiss and shush
in the rain
and you've got your directions
in the electronic map
on the dash like a TV
that tells you the way . . .
There's plenty of time
and hardly anybody
on the road . . .
You got a good start then
and a good chance to get
there again
if something bad don't happen

DOUGLAS R. EWART



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Monday found us as 'The Stir Trio' once again. This time at The Clown Lounge under the Turf Club at University and Snelling in St. Paul. The Lounge is the hip Monday night jazz spot in the basement that blooms on the night when the rock bands that play upstairs take an evening off. The Clown Lounge is the only venue I have seen that displays a stuffed trophy of the hindquarter of a buck deer on the wall. Drummer J. T. Bates brings his Fat Kid Wednesdays band in on a weekly basis for at least a set, and books other bands that are travelling through . . . We had a good night there. Our final Twin City gig was Tuesday at the Acadia Cafe in Minneapolis. We came in under the banner of **Forward Energy**, adding Steve Hirsh on drums and J. Otis Powell on spoken word. We played three sets and really got a chance to stretch out.



STEVE HIRSH



J. OTIS POWELL

"The terror we are made of"

Unfortunately the rest of this PDF will have to wait until I return from my Winter Midwest Tour. I'm going to Minneapolis tomorrow (2.14.08) ! I will be playing the Black Dog, The Center for Independent Artists, and the Clown Lounge . . . then on to the Krannet Art Museum in Champaign, IL, and gigs in Chicago at the Velvet Lounge and Brown Rice. This winter tour will be the **Forward Energy Band** with Myself on alto/tenor, flute and spoken word, Alica Mangan from L.A. on tenor sax, Dan Godston on trumpet, Joel Wanek on doublebass and Steven Hirsh on drums. There are many people to thank and many more things to say about the Ghost Dog Tour but it will mostly have to wait. However, I do wish to express my thanks to Rent Romus at Edgetone Records who has been extremely supportive. Please, stay tuned for the next episode of the Ghost Dog Tour PDF in the early spring. Thanks, Peace, Jim Ryan P.S. . . . Buy the Ghost Dog Tour CD . . . it is a very special effort of more than twenty musicians across the country . . . It will restore life and make your wick thick . . . It sends a great flower of a prayer to the higher beings, asking their help for continuance . . . It's very good sincere, authentic music & you will find it enjoyable, Thanks.