

A black and white photograph of a tree trunk cross-section. The wood grain is clearly visible, showing concentric growth rings. A large, jagged hole has been cut into the wood, revealing a dark interior. The hole is roughly circular but has irregular, splintered edges. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the texture of the wood and the depth of the hole.

**Christy Doran
In The Corner Of
The Eye**

In The Corner Of The Eye

For forty years, Irish-born, Lucerne-based guitarist Christy Doran has recorded prolifically for numerous labels. Inevitably perhaps, many of his earlier works are out of print, so it's cause for celebration that this release brings together the very best of *Phoenix* (hat Art, 1990) and *What a Band* (hat Art, 1992), two long-neglected yet essential Doran recordings.

The majority of Doran's releases have been with bands, from the seventies jazz-rock/free jazz group OM to New Bag, his main working group of the past two decades. Yet Doran's five-decade-long discography is peppered with outstanding solo and duo recordings.

Phoenix – duo collaborations with Ray Anderson, Hank Roberts, Marty Ehrlich and Urs Leimgruber –and *What a Band*– a stunning acoustic/electric solo adventure– represent some of the most visceral, experimental and lyrical performances in Doran's distinguished career.

It can't have been an easy task to select just half the tracks from those two releases for this compilation but the end product gives a fascinating insight into a more intimate side of Doran's artistry.

Don't confuse intimate with relaxed, however, for the solo acoustic tracks represented here - the orchestral ambition of Solomutations' and the fiery 'In the Corner of the Eye' - are pure exhilaration. The former, underpinned by a throbbing metronomic riff, sees Doran utilize loops and delay effects in a thrilling and at times ambient excursion reminiscent of Ralph Towner. On the latter, Doran exhibits fretwork as charged as anything John McLaughlin- an undoubted influence - has ever committed to record.

“McLaughlin? Yes of course,” acknowledges Doran. “I used to listen to *Extrapolation* (Marmalade Records, 1969), *My Goals Beyond* (Douglas Records, 1971) and his playing with Tony William’s Lifetime and Miles Davis. He was a great influence.”

Both numbers are, in a sense, snapshots in time: “My playing has changed a lot, of course,” admits Doran. I don’t think I could play them like that again.”

Though Doran has since returned to the solo acoustic format, notably on the CD/DVD *Acoustic Isles* (Creative Works Records, 2006) – a bold audio-visual experiment with Susanne Dubs – these days, the acoustic format remains something of an occasional diversion.

“It’s a really different instrument,” says Doran. “To be able to invent new things on the acoustic guitar, at the moment at least, seems more difficult for me because everything has been played already. There’s a **bigger field with the electric guitar.”**

Doran certainly pulls no punches on electric guitar, evidenced by his searing solo interpretation of the traditional Irish folk song ‘She Moved Through the Fair,’ where his tortured feedback and crying lines can’t help but evoke Jimi Hendrix’ performance of “The Star Spangled Banner” at Woodstock.

“Hendrix was and still is an influence,” admits Doran. “He had a uniquely personal sound and the solo thing he played at Woodstock, “The Star Spangled Banner”, is one of the great anti-war tunes – one of the most spectacular I’ve ever seen.”

The haunting “Celtic Ballad” – with renowned avant garde saxophonist Marty Ehrlich at his most lyrical - is another nod to Doran’s Hibernian roots; Doran’s father was a well-known balladeer in County Wicklow and his mother was an accordionist. With just a little imagination, Doran and Ehrlich’s caressing sound sculpture could hail from Irish balladry as old as **the Wicklow Mountains.**

On the brooding “Beyond Worlds”, Ehrlich’s clarinet dovetails with Doran’s tumbling, blues-inflected acoustic lines, the two voices eventually fading in quasi-psychedelic union.

While much of the collaborative music on the album has an improvised feel, instead the tracks with Ehrlich sound more through-composed: “I was on tour with Marty for eighteen concerts, with the car up and down Germany,” explains Doran, “so the compositions were able to go further. The cascade of the tunes are more defined.”

Doran sails closest to the jazz tradition on “The Warm Up” with trombonist Ray Anderson, although their bop-pish unison lines soon give way to simultaneous soloing of an altogether less codified nature.

On the episodic “Seven Shadows” and the celebratory “Lou Yuri” Doran is joined by versatile cellist Hank Roberts, a mainstay of Bill Frisell’s projects over the years. These two tunes – flights of grace and gravitas in equal measure - were recorded with minimum fuss when Doran and Roberts happened to coincide in Stuttgart one day.

“It was very spontaneous, pretty much first takes really,” recalls Doran. “Hank has great ears. He doesn’t close you in.”

The same could be said for Doran – a most generous leader who’s always open to the unexpected.

The final cut, “Spirale”, is by some distance the most outré of the collection. This extended free-form exploration pitches Doran and Urs Leimgruber into a rarefied world of sonic manipulations that are primal and tender in turn.

The pair first locked horns in the early 1970s, along with Fredy Studer and Bobby Burri, in the legendary Swiss jazz-rock/free jazz group OM, which reconvened, following a twenty five-year hiatus, in 2007. Suffice it to say, the two are on the same wavelength.

“I remember I came back from New York that day and went directly to the studio in Zurich,” Doran recalls. “Urs came and we just improvised for an hour or so. That was the most spectacular tune.”

Despite the passage of time what’s most striking about *In the Corner of the Eye* is just how innovative Doran’s music sounds today, a quarter of a century later. *In The Corner of the Eye* is a thrilling affirmation of Doran’s status as one of contemporary music’s most significant acoustic and electric guitarists - on either side of the Atlantic.

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Ian Patterson, August 2015

Christy Doran In The Corner Of The Eye

- Christy Doran *acoustic & electric guitars, delay devices on all tracks*
Ray Anderson *trombone on track 2*
Marty Ehrlich *clarinet & tenor saxophone on tracks 6 & 8*
Urs Leimgruber *soprano saxophone on track 10*
Hank Roberts *cello on tracks 4 & 9*

All compositions by Christy Doran (except otherwise indicated) published by TUHTAH Publishing, SUIZA.

1, 3, 5, & 7 recorded on June 18-20, 1991 by Peter Pfister at Radio Studio DRS, Zürich, Produced by Christy Doran & Werner X. Uehlinger; 2 recorded by Etienne Bron April 28, 1990 at Soundville Studio, Luzern; 4 & 9 recorded by Alex Katsaros February 3, 1990 at Daylight Studio, Stuttgart; 6 & 8 recorded by Alex Katsaros December 6, 1989 at Daylight Studio, Stuttgart; 10 recorded by Peter Pfister October 25, 1989 at Radio Studio DRS, Zürich; All recording without any use of overdubs; CD master by Peter Pfister on March 10th, 2016; Liner Notes by Ian Patterson; Cover photo by Luca Buti; Graphic concept by fuhrer vienna; Produced by Christy Doran; Executive production by Bernhard "Benne" Vischer & Werner X. Uehlinger.

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File under: Jazz/Free Improvisation

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|----|---|------|
| 1 | Solomutation
ISRC CH 131.1601432 | 5:54 |
| 2 | The Warm Up
by Ray Anderson
ISRC CH 131.1601433 | 4:31 |
| 3 | She moved through the Fair
Irish traditional
ISRC CH 131.1601434 | 4:40 |
| 4 | Seven Shadows
ISRC CH 131.1601435 | 6:38 |
| 5 | Switches, no Cuts
ISRC CH 131.1601436 | 6:11 |
| 6 | Celtic Ballad
ISRC CH 131.1601437 | 2:58 |
| 7 | In the Corner of the Eye
ISRC CH 131.1601438 | 6:20 |
| 8 | Beyond Words
ISRC CH 131.1601439 | 6:19 |
| 9 | Lou Yuri
ISRC CH 131.1601440 | 4:05 |
| 10 | Spirale (edited version)
by Urs Leimgruber/Christy Doran
ISRC CH 131.1601441 | 8:10 |

Total Time DDD ²⁴Bit 57:52

hat
OLOGY

Albert Ayler Quartet
European Radio Studio
Recordings 1964
hatOLOGY 678

Anthony Braxton
Quartet (Santa Cruz) 1993
2nd set
hatOLOGY 714

Cecil Taylor
Garden - 2nd set
hatOLOGY 720

Uwe Oberg
Work
hatOLOGY 740

Ellery Eskelin
Trio Willisau - Live
hatOLOGY 741



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