

# NoBusiness Records Releases



## The Group: Live (release date: 3/12/2012)

Historic Album Features Previously Unreleased Concert by a Forgotten All-Star Avant-Garde Jazz Quintet



- Ahmed Abdullah - trumpet and flugelhorn
- Marion Brown - alto saxophone
- Billy Bang - violin
- Sirone - bass
- Fred Hopkins - bass
- Andrew Cyrille - drums

1. Joann's Green Satin Dress (Butch Morris, arr. Billy Bang) 8'39"
2. Goodbye Pork Pie Hat (Charlie Mingus, arr. Marion Brown) 18'20"
3. La Placita (Marion Brown) 18'26"
4. Shift Below (Billy Bang) 6'00"
5. Amanpondo (Miriam Makeba, arr. Ahmed Abdullah) 25'16"

The Group, the cooperative quintet featuring violinist Billy Bang, reed player Marion Brown, trumpeter Ahmed Abdullah, bassist Sirone, and drummer Andrew Cyrille, is certainly one of the unaccountably overlooked bands in jazz. Unlike many of the all-star groups of the 1980s, such as New and Old Dreams, the Leaders, Sphere, and Song X, the Group never made a recording and rarely played outside the New York City area. But during the two years they were together from 1986 to 1987, they made some of the most significant and compelling music of the time.

With *The Group: Live*, NoBusiness Records corrects this historical oversight. The concert performance, which also features bassist Fred Hopkins, shows that the Group was not only an exciting band, but unlike many all-star groups that often played it safe, they were also an exploratory and innovative one.

Recorded in performance at the Jazz Center of New York in September 1986, the music features compositions from band members Brown and Bang, as well as brilliant interpretations of Charles Mingus's "Goodbye Pork Pie Hat," and a song by Miriam Makeba. Uniting two generations of the New York jazz avant-garde—elders Brown and Cyrille cut their teeth in the 1960s, while the remainder of the band came up in the 1970s loft scene—the Group easily encompassed different styles of composing and improvising. Brown is unfailingly free and lyrical on "La Placita"; Abdullah pushes bebop into abstraction on "Goodbye Pork Pie Hat"; and Bang is at his most explosive and bluesy on "The Shift Below." Cyrille makes everything swing with his light but powerful touch. And in the only time they were recorded performing together, Sirone and Hopkins add a special rhythmic and harmonic depth to music. Not only are individual solos brilliant, but the band's collective approach creates telepathic interactions throughout the set. It's a performance of such sophistication and joyfulness that it seems incredible that this ensemble could have been overlooked for more than 25 years.

As part of its ongoing series that brings to light neglected and previously unissued recordings of the New York Loft Era, NoBusiness Records will also release a limited edition LP. The CD release includes a detailed history of the band written by trumpeter Ahmed Abdullah and an extensive collection of previously unpublished photos and concert flyers. The continuation of the Group's story, along with a short video of a reunion concert of surviving members at the 2011 Vision Festival is posted on both the NoBusiness web site ([www.nobusinessrecords.com](http://www.nobusinessrecords.com)) and Ahmed Abdullah's web site ([www.ahmedian.com](http://www.ahmedian.com)).