

Michael Byron

The Ultra Violet Of Many Parallel Paths

No label CD/DL

Pianist Joseph Kubera is an exceptionally skilful and enlightened interpreter of John Cage, Roscoe Mitchell, Robert Ashley, Julius Eastman and other crucial figures in contemporary music. He is also a genuinely catalytic presence, promoting composition of adventurous works through his own very evident capacity to stretch limits and redefine horizons. In recent years Michael Byron's music has derived considerable benefit from Kubera's formidable combination of instrumental athleticism, technical precision and conceptual lucidity. That clarity, rigour and vigour are a perfect match for Byron's own strengths and inclinations, as can be heard from *Dreamers Of Pearl* (2008) and last year's *The Celebration* (both issued by New World).

The Ultra Violet Of Many Parallel Paths, recorded in November 2017 before an audience at the New York venue Roulette Intermedium and now released by Byron himself, projects their creative association to vertiginous new heights. Teamed with Marilyn Non ken, a comparably awesome pianist, Kubera is in incandescent form. The duo's 36 minute realisation of the two distinct yet complementary movements of Byron's ambitious, intricate and painstakingly achieved score suggests simultaneously the meticulous working through of complex mathematical models and an absorbing process of organic change driven by shared intuition.

Frequently the surface of Byron's music conveys an overwhelming impression of density as well as intense restlessness. Yet despite that relentless agitation, grippingly intermeshed complexity and fierce momentum Kubera and Non ken keep the space of this dramatic music astonishingly well-lit and ventilated. They clash and send out sparks and their instrumental colouration takes on a tinge

from that momentary friction. The music's incessant flow seems to draw fresh energy from each localised collision. Even at their most turbulent and torrential, these remarkable pianists manage to preserve an essential poise within the swarms of notes and exhilaratingly reckless criss-crossing of phrases, like dancers sustaining their core of balance and coordination within flurries of frenzied movement.

The Ultra Violet Of Many Parallel Paths is a truly dynamic and thrilling experience. It confirms Byron as one of those contemporary composers who can justifiably be classed as crucial.

Julian Cowley

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