



*A Little Off The Top*  
Giovanni Di Domenico/Peter Jacquemyn/  
Chris Corsano (NoBusiness)  
*This Is Our Language*  
Rodrigo Amado (Not Two)  
by Ken Waxman

Drummer Chris Corsano converted to free music after witnessing performances by Cecil Taylor and William Parker and brings the same animation and restraint to these discs as he has used with Evan Parker, Paul Flaherty and Akira Sakata. Without compromising his style, he's crafty enough to forge a different strategy for each CD.

Italian pianist Giovanni di Domenico is a player to whom Corsano can easily relate. Like a fundamentalist preacher's sermons, his playing makes no space for hesitation or fragility. Nearly every note on *A Little Off The Top* is splashed out with a power-lifter's determination, textures clashing together like Mahjong tiles and glissandi hammered into ferocious blurs. His playing isn't without humor though. On the extended "Golondrina" hints of boogie-woogie and balladic pacing sneak in, then vanish, like insect chirps before a storm. Belgian bassist Peter Jacquemyn is no musical milksop either. Adept at col legno and other extended string techniques, his speed-of-light string slashes, bumps and shakes often join inner-piano-string plucks to create pulsating rhythmic drones. Faced with bulky tone-propelling from his partners, Corsano takes the

opposite approach. His response is to sweep and pat corrosive accents from his knit, working these gestures into a constantly flowing course of downplayed but swinging pressure points. The paramount instance of this is "Tibutòn". With Corsano breaking up the time alongside Jacquemyn's rich viola-de-gamba-like tone, di Domenico jabs staccato sounds into the continuum like flies landing on, but not sticking to, flypaper.

*This Is Our Language* is a high-energy sound eruption with Corsano, Portuguese tenor saxophonist Rodrigo Amado, Joe McPhee on pocket trumpet and alto saxophone and bassist Kent Kessler. The four press ahead with ferocity that makes the above album seem like a chamber trio. But there's also discipline beside the ferocity. Corsano's deliberate polyrhythms and Kessler's propulsive thumps aren't even heard until the second track. Before that McPhee and Amado use their saxophones to tease out the undulating theme as if slowly unrolling a carpet. The former's idiosyncratic style has developed over the years, but there are points of congruence with the latter's technique. Although more mellow in execution, as demonstrated on the introductory "The Primal Word", Amado is a pointillist, building up his solos in bites and slices until it jells into a gratifying whole. Perhaps because his initial instrument was trumpet, McPhee relies more on quick tonguing and repeated vibrations. Corsano's aptitude is given its showcase on "Ritual Evolution": as the horn players splatter tones, he underscores the color scheme with rumbles from hands and brushes so as not to upset the scene. Later, as Kessler holds onto the beat, the drummer splashes out a tapestry of constantly undulating polyrhythms alongside him.

For more information, visit [nobusinessrecords.com](http://nobusinessrecords.com) and [nottwo.com](http://nottwo.com). Corsano is at The Stone Jan. 5th and JACK Jan. 6th. See Calendar.



*Skullduggery*  
Universal Indians w/Joe McPhee (Clean Feed)  
by Stuart Broomer

Universal Indians is an Amsterdam-based trio of American-born tenor saxophonist John Dikeman and Norwegian bassist Jon Rune Strøm and drummer Tollef Østvang. If the name raises question marks, even a cursory listen will suggest Albert Ayler's 1967 composition from *Love Cry!* Dikeman's allegiance to Ayler is a strong one, his playing often marked by vocal extremes, but he has his own resources as well, sometimes creating continuous multiphonics, which include lines resembling throat singing. Dikeman is in ideal company with Joe McPhee. Already 74 when this concert was recorded at the Zuiderperhuis in Antwerp in 2014, McPhee is a direct link to the musical ferment of the '60s and his work, whether on pocket trumpet or saxophone, testifies to its power and ongoing relevance.

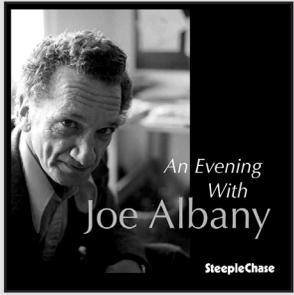
The improvisations sometimes generate firestorms of sound, at others slip into subtle sonic play and pointed conversation. Sheer force comes to the fore in the intense wailing on the extended "Yeah and?" and the title track, which moves from energy music to blues to a Dikeman jeremiad standing as a benchmark for how much emotion can be forced out of a saxophone. There's an empathy between Dikeman and McPhee that sometimes has them exchanging identities—the former's ferocity, the latter's elegance—whether the moment is characterized by heat or light.

The quartet's greatest strength is that it plays

genuinely four-way music, with Strøm and Østvang rarely far from a listener's immediate attention. Strøm is frequently prominent, whether conversing with rapid trumpet sonics, bowing with reed-like fluency or plucking with a force that has the strings slapping against the fingerboard. For his part, Østvang is equally at home providing sympathetic accents to a dialogue or propelling the music forward, all the way to the unison riffing and walking bass that suddenly emerge to conclude the final "Wanted".

For more information, visit [cleanfeed-records.com](http://cleanfeed-records.com). Joe McPhee is at The Stone Jan. 6th and Clemente Soto Velez Cultural Center Jan. 14th. See Calendar.

## UNEARTHED GEM



An Evening With  
**Joe Albany**  
SteepleChase

*An Evening With  
Joe Albany (SteepleChase)*  
by Mark Keresman

The life of Joe Albany (born 92 years and died 28 years ago this month) has parallels with other legendary—and tragic—jazz pianists. Albany was a tremendous player, respected by Charlie Parker and Lester Young, both with whom he'd worked. Albany spent much of his life battling heroin addiction and that and prison time interfered with his career. In 2014, the movie *Low Down*, based upon a memoir by his daughter Amy-Jo, was released. Yet Albany had great triumphs amid the tragedies and one of them was the night of performances that eventually became the album *An Evening With Joe Albany*.

The first volume's liner notes mention it was recorded at the Jazzhus Montmartre in Copenhagen, May 1973, but there is no audience sound. Like Art Tatum, a major influence, Albany flourished in solo rather than group contexts; also like Tatum, Albany had an ornate style that could be breathtaking. *Evening...* is Albany unaccompanied on a program of standards. A medley of Vernon Duke tunes, "Autumn in New York/April in Paris/I Can't Get Started", immerses the listener into Albany's sonic world. He respects the melodies, injecting many rich flourishes along with his mercurial improvisations. Albany's sense of swing is more than a bit old-school, jaunty rather than driving, favoring elegance over breakneck tempos. Albany does "All the Things You Are" wonderfully, making you feel as if you're in someone's living room, then jolts you into a jazz bistro after midnight by playing some gracefully percussive notes. With "As Time Goes By", Albany takes you from Humphrey Bogart's *Casablanca* to his very own, affectionate deconstruction of the melody, teasing the ear with shards of the song, his little asides hinting to intrigues as yet unrevealed.

The Gershwin's "Our Love is Here to Stay" begins almost serenely, then Albany shows that love can be equal parts reverence, reverie and high-wire balancing act, the latter displayed by his knotty, witty improvisations, yet never losing the song's innate sweetness. Ellington medley "In A Sentimental Mood/Prelude to A Kiss/In My Solitude" is essayed with such a rhapsodic intensity it can only be described as ravishing.

For more information, visit [steeplechase.dk](http://steeplechase.dk)

# ESP-DISK'

BEST OF 2015



THE UPPERCUT | MATTHEW SHIPP MAT WALERIAN DUO  
live at Okuden

ESP-DISK'

BEST OF 2015



LAST EXIT  
IRON PATH

available from [espdisk.com](http://espdisk.com)  
& [forcedexposure.com](http://forcedexposure.com)