

## Channeling Coltrane: A live concert video of *Electric Ascension*

**12 innovative master-musicians in what we hope will be a euphoric incarnation of John Coltrane's mighty *Ascension*, to be filmed for posterity**

John Coltrane's *Ascension* was called, "...the most powerful human sound ever recorded" in Down Beat Magazine in 1965, and "the most vexatious work in jazz history" by jazz critic Gary Giddins. These contradictory claims indicate just how controversial this music was at the time Coltrane recorded it in 1965. *Ascension* in fact still causes arguments; the ideas behind the music are still alive and making waves. All the more reason to rejoice in *Electric Ascension*, reincarnated for the 21st century in live performance by the large, fluctuating ensemble "Orkestrova". **This Kickstarter campaign is to raise funds for a stand-alone concert video of a one-time-only performance at Guelph Jazz Festival in Canada on September 7, 2012. We hope to share the experience of this new *Ascension* with a world-wide audience of enthusiasts of forward-thinking jazz, improvised music, high-level artistry and John Coltrane.** To go to the Rova / *Electric Ascension* Kickstarter campaign site right now, where there is a nice 8 minute video explaining the project .... **click** <http://kck.st/MAzbMx>

If you want though, there is more to read just below...



**ELECTRIC ASCENSION**  
COMING TO GUELPH JAZZ FESTIVAL • SEPTEMBER 07 2012

 Nels Cline el. guitar	 Carla Kihlstedt violin	 Ikue Mori electronics	 Hamid Drake drums	 Fred Frith el. bass	 Jenny Scheinman violin	 Chris Brown electronics	 Rob Mazurek cornet, electronics	 Larry Ochs tenor sax	 Bruce Ackley soprano sax	 Steve Adams alto sax	 Jon Raskin baritone sax
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*I have never heard anything like it, and will remember it for the rest of my life. I encourage everyone to one day dig these prophets.* – from *Jambase* review of 2003 show in San Francisco.

On September 7, 2012 Orkestrova will perform *Electric Ascension* at the Guelph Jazz Festival in Ontario. On the Main Stage of the River Run Centre, **Rova Saxophone Quartet** will be joined by monster players **Nels Cline** on electric guitar, **Fred Frith** on electric bass, **Hamid Drake** on drums, **Jenny Scheinman** and **Carla Kihlstedt** on violins, **Ikue Mori** and **Chris Brown** on electronics, and **Rob Mazurek** on cornet and electronics. Because of the cost of collecting all these master musicians in one place

and because of inevitable scheduling conflicts, the Guelph Jazz Festival show will be only the second performance since 2007, so it is crucial to take advantage of this rare opportunity to hear and film the inevitable sonic rave-up by this cast of musical instigators.

Rova:Arts is partnering with John Rogers of Ideas In Motion, who has been at work for four years on *Cleaning the Mirror*, a documentary about how *Electric Ascension* evolved from Coltrane's masterwork. The full-length Guelph concert- video would accompany and complete the documentary. In Roger's words... "I've seen *Electric Ascension* performed four times now, and each performance has been a transcendent musical experience and a powerful evocation of the spirit of John Coltrane. The documentary we are making explores the meaning of engaging with Coltrane's composition for the musicians, the physics of conducted improvisation, some history, and snatches of the music. But from the beginning I saw the documentary as accompanying a complete concert. This music must be experienced in its entirety to appreciate its vitality, its emotion, and the terrains of the exploration undertaken by the ensemble."

In his late period music, John Coltrane sought nothing less than universal consciousness. Listening to the original *Ascension* after four decades, we encounter a formidable work, bristling with creativity and the power to inspire. In *Electric Ascension*, we find a later generation of musicians exploring the territory, still reaching for liberation and audience transformation. Rova Saxophone Quartet arrangers Jon Raskin and Larry Ochs have cast their *Electric Ascension* with improvisers weaned on Coltrane and the sonic experiments of the decades that followed his passing in 1967. Since 2003, performances of this work at 7 festivals in North America and Europe, including the 2005 Music Unlimited Festival in Wels, have been a revelation and met with standing ovations and critical acclaim.

Our proposed concert video will be as invaluable as it is unparalleled. As enthusiasts know all too well, performances of innovative jazz works of this scale and ambition are extremely rare. Even more rare are opportunities to see them captured on multiple cameras with the same level of artistry one would expect in a network broadcast of a world-class symphony orchestra. Rogers and partner Jim Maier have shot *Electric Ascension*, documentary style, in Paris and Saalfelden, so we know what the challenges are. There is a tremendous amount transpiring on-stage, and the more you can see of it the more your understanding of the music grows, and the more profound your experience becomes. The musician interactions are varied, simultaneous, spread out all over the stage, and often defy capture on camera. With multiple cameras, we will get all the action in a precise and intimate way... A five-camera, high quality video of *Electric Ascension*, performed in its entirety, will be an unprecedented musical document.

So if you can't be there in person on September 7, or even if you do plan to be there, join this global community of people and world-class musicians forming here, and help us make this exciting music accessible to many others. In addition to the DVD, there are plans for screenings of this concert-shoot and the feature documentary in cities around the USA, Canada and Europe. Help us to prove the late Glenn Spearman's claim, made as he left the stage after performing *Ascension* with Rova: "the mof&!#king piece! It's the "Handel's Messiah" of jazz, man! We should be playing this every year at Christmas!!"

Photo credits: Joaquim Mendes (*Electric Ascension* Lisbon, 2006); Michael Wilson (Scheinman), Georg Pillwein (Adams, Raskin, Ochs), Heike Liss (Frith), Peter Gannushkin (Cline, Kihlstedt), Antonio Baiano (Ackley).