

See Through Trio: Lines and Spaces - Woods and Waters CD 2009

As on their first album, *Our Own Devices* (2006), Toronto-based See Through Trios *Lines and Spaces* offers the listener a refreshing mix of freely improvised interaction blended with often beautiful, clever compositions (and clever titles). This group plays together well, and all three musicians—Pete Johnston on bass, Tania Gill on piano and melodica, and Mark Laver on soprano saxophone—are creative and intriguing improvisers. At times introspective, as on *Rural Route Number Two*, at times humorous, as on *Peter Patter*, the trios sound coheres somewhere in the general area of clarinetist Jimmy Giuffrè's groups featuring Steve Swallow on bass and Paul Bley on piano. But the music is very much their own, crafted out of experience gleaned from the thriving Toronto improvised music scene (even though their website describes the music as rural free jazz). Gill, Laver, and Johnston play together in various other groupings throughout the city, and the trios music is built on musical communication strengthened by familiarity and friendship. And speaking of friends and family, I particularly enjoy how this group manages to make music that both your mom and her evil twin might listen to. Or if that's too weird of a domestic situation, perhaps it's your mom and your hipster friend reared on Ornette Coleman. If this is getting to be an uncomfortable listening party, don't worry: the See Through Trios' treats will sound especially good with just you and a pair of headphones. At the end of the album, you might just shed a little tear once you get over the pleasant surprise of guest-vocalist Victor Bateman singing a poem by Canadian poet Alden Nowlan, *Looking for Nancy*. Pete Johnston, the chief composer of the See Through Trio, once remarked to me that he writes intentionally drummer-less music for the group. Perhaps this is what makes the music so clear and precise. (As a drummer myself, I don't take offense). The See Through Trio makes music worth seeing in your mind's ear. Take a look and a listen at the See Through Trios website: www.seethroughmusic.com/index.html.