

ORNETTE COLEMAN'S SCIENCE FICTION

"The Bad Plus had just rampaged through 'Street Woman,' from Ornette Coleman's 1971 album Science Fiction. At the song's last thunderous downbeat, the crowd had sprung, wildly cheering, to its feet. Blame demographics if you must, but it was the only time I've seen a standing ovation in the middle of a Village Vanguard set." – NATE CHINEN for JAZZTIMES

Ornette Coleman's 1972 album *Science Fiction* is widely considered a landmark recording – and especially so for the members of **The Bad Plus**. Coleman's singular combination of melodic beauty and avant-garde openness is enhanced by overdubs, vocals, and a sonic production unlike any other jazz recording in existence. *Science Fiction* boldly insists on new spectrums of music that are possible.

As long as **Reid Anderson**, **Ethan Iverson** and **David King** have been making music together, *Science Fiction* has been one of their touchstone records. One afternoon at a radio promo when King suggested The Bad Plus play "Street Woman", the band didn't hesitate to rehearse or discuss interpretation. No emulation of style was possible. Instead, the music simply fell out of the trio with complete naturalness.

Coleman's compositions are too beautiful not to be treated with devoted respect. However, the last thing Coleman himself would want is a simple simulacrum of his style. *Science Fiction* in particular boldly insists that any kind of music is possible. It is up to the interpreter to play themselves through Coleman's melodies.

The Bad Plus has been widely heralded for their innovative re-workings of rock, indie-rock, electronic, and modernist classical music. The group recently tackled Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring* in the multi-media production *On Sacred Ground* (co-commissioned by Duke Performances and Lincoln Center), and in the wake of fruitful collaborations with Joshua Redman, Bill Frisell, and Mark Morris, The Bad Plus now turns to a jazz classic with *Science Fiction*. No strangers to the music of Ornette Coleman, the band had the opportunity to perform selections from *Science Fiction* at the Walker Arts Center with Coleman himself in the audience. Ornette praised their ability to interpret his own music and artistic philosophy with the signature Bad Plus style, calling it: "The performance that I enjoyed the most... they all sounded like individuals in the way they expressed it for themselves."

Since the original album features a substantial horn presence, The Bad Plus is teaming up with an additional trio of accomplished musicians. Saxophonist **Tim Berne** was a crucial early influence of The Bad Plus, saxophonist **Sam Newsome** is renowned for both his solo concerts and recordings, and trumpeter **Ron Miles** has had a prodigious career as a bandleader and collaborator with the likes of Bill Frisell. There will be vocals and possibly an electronic element as the vision of Ornette Coleman is explored by an extraordinary grouping of musicians.

ON SACRED GROUND: STRAVINSKY'S RITE OF SPRING

"The Bad Plus have succeeded in turning a monolithic 20th century ballet score into a 21st century masterpiece." – JAZZ POLICE

For over a decade **The Bad Plus** – bassist **Reid Anderson**, pianist **Ethan Iverson**, and percussionist **David King** – have created an uncompromising body of work by shattering musical convention. *Rolling Stone* calls their amalgam of jazz, pop, rock and avant-garde "about as badass as highbrow gets," while *The New York Times* says the band is "better than anyone at mixing the sensibilities of post-60s jazz and indie rock." Few jazz groups in recent memory have amassed such acclaim, and few have generated as much controversy by audaciously bucking musical trends. While the bulk of their output has been originals, they have famously deconstructed covers in the pop, rock, electronic, and classical idioms, including Igor Stravinsky's "Variation d'Apollon" and works by Ligeti, Nirvana, Wilco and Pink Floyd.

On Sacred Ground, a reimagining of **Stravinsky's** iconic orchestral work, *The Rite of Spring*, is the trio's most ambitious endeavor yet. Co-commissioned by Duke Performances and New York's Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, The Bad Plus spent more than a year working on the project before its premiere at Duke University. Not interested in using *The Rite of Spring* simply as a vehicle for improvisation, the trio engaged in a rigorous study of Stravinsky's original composition before beginning to craft their own interpretation. An integral part of their rendition, the trio incorporates a multi-media presentation created by filmmakers **Cristina Guadeloupe** and **Noah Hutton**. *The Boston Globe* called the performance, "as psychedelic as it was lofty. Impressionistic films and mood-accentuating lighting enhanced the performance which itself ran from manic to mournful," adding that "playing seriously but not being stuffy about it is part of The Bad Plus' allure." Set to release an *On Sacred Ground* recording in early 2014, The Bad Plus' brilliant transformation of Stravinsky's work proves that there are still vital musical lessons to be learned from the piece that caused a riot at its Paris premiere 100 years ago.