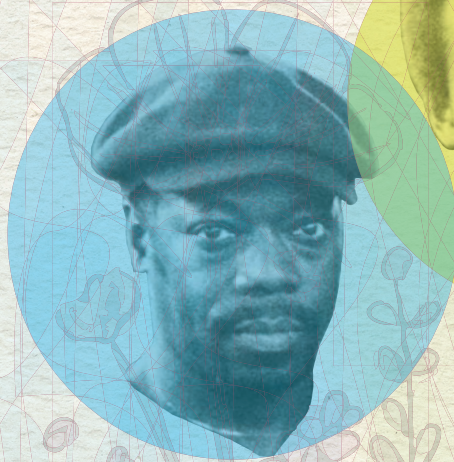
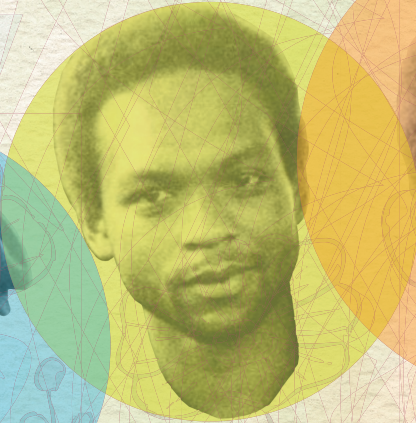


JAMES NEWTON QUARTET



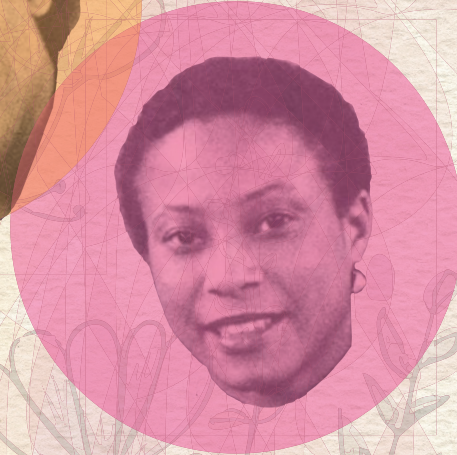
ANDREW CYRILLE
DRUMS



ANTHONY COX
BASS



JAMES NEWTON
FLUTE

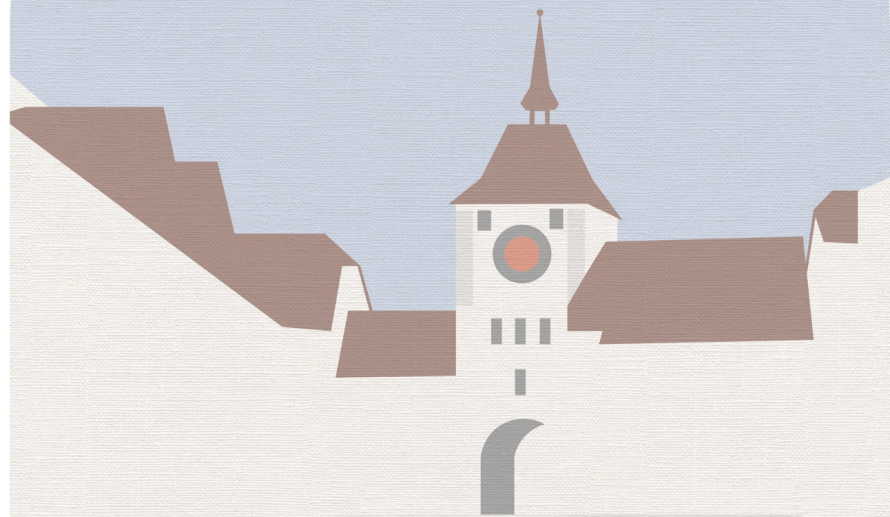


GERI ALLEN
PIANO

LIVE IN WILLISAU
SWITZERLAND 1983



JAMES NEWTON QUARTET LIVE IN WILLISAU, SWITZERLAND



In the spring of 1983, a reimagined version of the JAMES NEWTON QUARTET emerged onto the European jazz scene. Promoter/Booking Agent Stephan Meyner, later also the artistic director and founder of the Minor Music Recording Company, organized the Quartet's tour.

After decades of being out of touch, Stephan contacted me, expressing his regret that the Quartet had not released a recording to commemorate its contributions to the art form. However, his persistence paid off when he unearthed a recording of the Quartet's performance in Willisau, Switzerland. Willisau is known for its passionate love of Jazz and is also the hosting city of the internationally recognized Willisau Jazz Festival, founded by Niklaus Troxler in 1975.

A few months before the tour, a dear friend and colleague from Detroit, composer/multi-instrumentalist/scholar Rev. Dr. Dwight Andrews, informed me about a fantastic young Detroit pianist/composer/scholar completing her Master's Degree in Ethnomusicology at the University of Pittsburgh – Geri Allen. Her thesis topic was Eric Dolphy: A Musical Analysis of Three Pieces with a Brief Biography. I immediately contacted Ms. Allen, and she sent me tapes of her live performances in Detroit, Eric Dolphy transcriptions, and some of her groundbreaking, highly evolved compositions. We were both touched deeply by Eric Dolphy's profound influence, which immensely shaped many musical visions of the period. After listening to her tapes, I immediately knew Ms. Allen was an enormously consequential, world-class artist whose groundbreaking abilities would create seismic ripples in the furtherance of music across multiple genres. Ms. Allen's art has significantly

impacted the artists that have followed her. Her deep grounding in the tradition, together with a vision that foreshadowed much of the innovative approaches to composition and ensemble interaction, is now wholeheartedly embraced in contemporary language and serves as a sterling model for the continuance of the art form.

The JAMES NEWTON QUARTET members for this European tour included Geri Allen on piano, Anthony Cox on bass, and Andrew Cyrille on drums. The Willisau recording is among the first recordings of Ms. Allen's long, historic, and distinguished career.

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Bassist/composer/bandleader Anthony Cox possesses an immense, highly virtuosic command of his instrument, performing with great sensitivity, contributing to and responding with aplomb to every nuance of the ensemble with incredible technical facility and deftly and fluently traversing multiple styles. His sense of swing always adds much to those privileged to collaborate with him. His arco technique in *Pinkie Below* reveals another aspect of his high-level ability to articulate the most subtle nuances. Mr. Cox embodies the concept of art created by risk-taking to keep the music fresh and to develop the ensembles' capabilities exponentially. At the time of this recording, he was in great demand; he was working with Sam Rivers, Joe Lovano, Geri Allen, Kenny Wheeler, Ed Blackwell, Billy Higgins, John Scofield, The



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NDR Big Band, Dino Saluzzi, Henry Threadgill, and many others. He later collaborated with Mr. Cyrille in 1984 with Ms. Allen's epic recording *The Printmakers*, one of the most significant and influential recordings of the last 50 years.

Andrew Cyrille is a griot and one of the most respected drummers in Jazz ever. His ensembles and compositions have added much to the tradition he embodies. He is known for enthusiastically working with modernists like David Murray, Muhal Richard Abrams, Mal Waldron, Horace Tapscott, Peter Brötzmann, and Oliver Lake. Mr. Cyrille was the drummer on Billy Bang's *A Tribute to Stuff Smith* and contributed to Sun Ra's last studio session. I remember hearing him live with the Cecil Taylor Unit (a trio with alto saxophonist Jimmy Lyons) at Royce Hall at UCLA around 1973. The performance was an epiphany that impacted the Los Angeles artistic community (visual artists, writers, and musicians) for years. Mr. Cyrille also worked with Mary Lou Williams, Coleman Hawkins, Sir Roland Hanna, Illinois Jacquet, Kenny Dorham, Freddie Hubbard, Walt Dickerson, Rahsaan Roland Kirk, and Nigerian percussionist Babatunde Olatunji among others. He signifies the rare ability to move through each wave of music innovation and incorporate its best aspects into his ever-evolving language, echoing the models for this concept with whom he shared the stage, Mary Lou Williams and

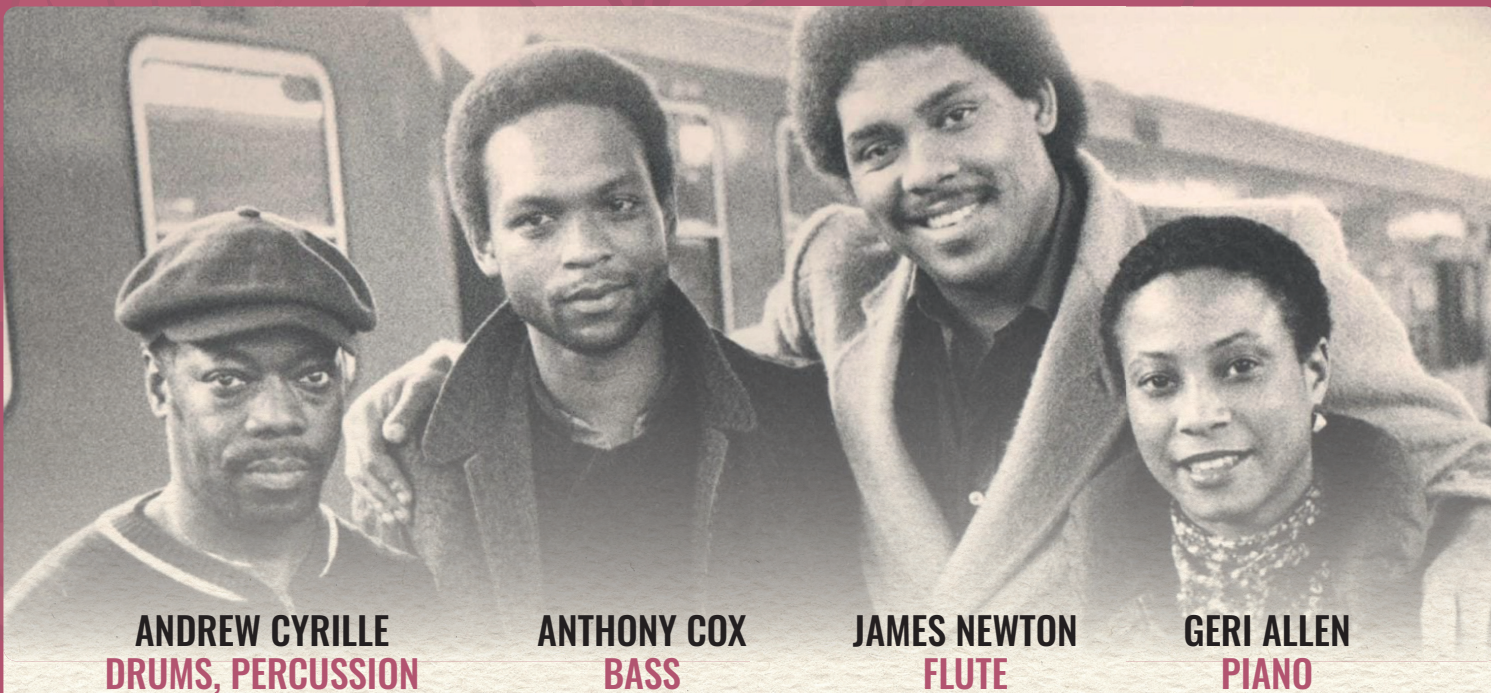
Coleman Hawkins. Maestro Cyrille's artistry is regal. Through much research and practice, he commands multiculturalism within the drum set. This wide-ranging language produces a color palette reflecting his studies' worldwide vocabulary and conclusions. He is an absolute master, stitching together the quilt of memory and culture that a true griot embodies.

The recording's repertoire includes Charles Mingus' loving tribute to the memory of Charles Christopher Parker, *Reincarnation of a Lovebird*, Geri Allen's masterpiece *The Printmakers*, and two originals by me: *Forever Charles*, dedicated to Mr. Mingus and *Pinkie Below*, the nickname given by one of his uncles to my then-infant son James III because he was the youngest grandchild of the family and born with a light complexion. The music embraced risk-taking to target a fresh art that strived to withstand the test of time, reflecting in our humble way what the women and men who practice this art form dream through hard work and dedication: a language that can reframe the understanding of who we are as a people, what our aspirations are, and what we can humbly offer to bring people together.

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James Newton

May 2025



ANDREW CYRILLE
DRUMS, PERCUSSION

ANTHONY COX
BASS

JAMES NEWTON
FLUTE

GERI ALLEN
PIANO

- 1 Reincarnation of a Lovebird** (Charles Mingus) 11:39
- 2 Pinkie Below** (James Newton) 14:10
- 3 Forever Charles** (James Newton) 17:55
- 4 The Printmakers** (Geri Allen) 21:00

Recorded at Hotel Mohren on March 26th, 1983 at Willisau, Switzerland by **Walter Troxler**. Concert of "**Jazz in Willisau**" organized by **Niklaus Troxler**.

Tape research by **Stephan Meyner** and **Gerald Lichter**.

Many thanks to Schweizerische Nationalphonotek (Swiss National Sound Archives) **Lugano** and **Giuliano Castellani**, **Barbara Lurati** and **Barbara Hunziker**.

Edited and mastered by **Elmar Gillet**.

Photo by **Enrico Romero** • Artwork by **Heinrich Buttler**. The producers would like to thank **Gerald Lichter** and **Klaus Mutschler** for their support of this release.

Produced by **James Newton**, **Stephan Meyner** and **Elmar Gillet**.

Executive producers: **Stephan Meyner** and **Elmar Gillet** for
Rhythm 'n' Flow Records.

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