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PETER WALKER	THE PURPLE WHY
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STEVE TINTWEISS and **The Purple Why**

STEVE TINTWEISS - bass viol, melodica and vocals
MARK WHITECAGE - tenor saxophone and flute
TREVOR KOEHLER - baritone saxophone
JAMES DUBOIS - trumpet
LAURENCE COOK - drums
JUDY STUART - vocals
AMY SHEFFER - vocals
THE UNIVERSAL HEROES

THE PURPLE WHY 1965
Entire ensemble of both groups

JUST BE MINE 1968

MONOGAMY IS OUT 1967

SPACE ROCKS 1967

All compositions by Steve Tintweiss

TOWN HALL



The Town Hall in New York City

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|-------|
| 8. Universal Heroes | 1:49 |
| 9. Just Be Mine | 8:24 |
| 10. Monogamy Is Out | 10:17 |
| 11. Space Rocks | 9:33 |
| 12. "We Are All The Universal Heroes" | 0:25 |

The Purple Why:

James DuBoise (trumpet)

Mark Whitecage (tenor saxophone and flute)

Trevor Koehler (baritone saxophone)

Judy Stuart and Amy Sheffer (vocals)

Steve Tintweiss (double bass, melodica, vocals, composer, leader)

Laurence Cook (drums)

Recorded September 14, 1968 in NYC: New Jazz at The Town Hall

Also available from INKY DoT MEDIA label

IDM EP 001 Steve Tintweiss Spacelight Band "Whistle Stop Tour/I Lust You" b/w "Ash Dung Blues" 12" 45rpm

IDM EP 002 Judy Stuart The Apostolic Session 10" 45rpm

IDM CD 004 Steve Tintweiss and The Purple Why at Tompkins Square Park

IDM CD 005 Cook/Coursil/Gale/Robinson/Tintweiss Avenue B Free Jam

IDM CD 007 Steve Tintweiss Spacelight Band at NYU 1980 (2-CD set)

MARKSTOWN

Steve Tintweiss and

THE PURPLE WHY

St. Mark's Church | The Town Hall

On this package are some of the essential early documents of Steve Tintweiss's work as a bassist, composer and bandleader, in two very picturesque New York City settings. His first full-fledged, regular ensemble, The Purple Why, is caught at an Operation Airlift Biafra benefit concert, and in concert at Town Hall—both in the summer of 1968.

That season marks a critical point of inflection in the bassist's working career. Through the previous years he had been mostly a sideman or in co-operative jam session situations in the Lower East Side, Queens College with Dave Liebman, and in Brooklyn. In this moment Tintweiss joined the ferment of the Lower East Side where the enduring sound of Laurence Cook's and Mark Whitecage's artistries were staples. In this environment he encountered the players that he would assemble into an expanded Purple Why band: singer-songwriter Judy Stuart, for one; James DuBoise he met at the home of saxophonist Bert Wilson; and Amy Sheffer in the preparations for Marzette Watts's Savoy recording including Patty Waters. They were some of the lasting voices that gave The Purple Why its distinctive character. The Town Hall appearance boasts also a singular appearance of Insect Trust baritone saxophonist Trevor Koehler.

Into the swirl of psychedelic—avant-garde—anti-Vietnam War—hippie diversity came this group The Purple Why. Tintweiss designed it to have something in common with the Rock groups that were commanding attention in the period of awakening at the end of the Sixties—starting with a name for the band, rather than just naming the leader. Country Joe and the Fish... Jefferson Airplane... Doors... Why not 'The Purple Why'? Right away it was very visibly placed: One of the group's launching performances (and most memorable) was in the massive April 15, 1967 Mobilization for Peace march from Central Park to the United Nations. It was very high-profile exposure—reported as the largest New York City protest to date. Tintweiss's group performed before hundreds of thousands on its own float at the event, which was led by Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., Dr. Spock, and other prominent activists. The Purple Why was photographed in performance, but apparently not recorded.

The ensemble was roughly a year old when it appeared at a benefit in the summer of 1968. The cause at hand was a relief effort for the newly-declared state of Biafra. Oppression in this African nation led to an embargo; the embargo led to relief efforts; the relief efforts called for fundraising via benefit concerts, one of which was the August event at St. Mark's Church. These days one hears about Operation Airlift Biafra in reference to Jimi Hendrix's appearance at a benefit for The Peace Ship at Carnegie Hall and at The Scene in New York August 12, 1968, headlining with Joan Baez. But Hendrix also showed up for the St. Mark's Church events in the middle of the following week, on the Thursday after Steve Tintweiss and The Purple Why had appeared there Wednesday. For this nearly week-long marathon at the church, the talent pool was remarkable, then and still: Joan Baez, Richie Havens, Judy Collins, Tim Hardin, Pete Seeger, Joni Mitchell, Phil Ochs, Country Joe McDonald, Tom Paxton, Eric Andersen. Steve remembers taking part in an ad hoc duo jam with Joan Baez while tuning up backstage, in front of her many admirers among the musicians there awaiting their turn to perform. Steve Tintweiss and The Purple Why was the only jazz group of any kind on the bill with these established artists.

St. Mark's Church-in-the-Bowery

- | | |
|-------------------------|------|
| 1. bells intro | 0:20 |
| 2. Ramona, I Love You | 4:52 |
| 3. How Sweet? | 3:55 |
| 4. Contrapuntal | 4:17 |
| 5. N.E.S.W. up/down | 5:22 |
| 6. The Purple Why theme | 1:15 |
| 7. closing announcement | 0:25 |

The Purple Why:

James DuBoise (trumpet)

Mark Whitecage (tenor saxophone and flute)

Judy Stuart (voice)

Steve Tintweiss (double bass, vocals, slide whistle, composer, leader)

Laurence Cook (drums).

On track 1: various members of the ensemble play bells

Recorded August 21, 1968 in NYC at St. Mark's Church,

Concert for Operation Airlift Biafra

All compositions and arrangements by Steve Tintweiss (Inkwhite Productions/ASCAP)

This Edition

Produced and recorded by Steve Tintweiss

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signature changes going into the faster section. It was kinda like putting a puzzle together—with some free-form sections. Then a conducted ending, where we start from a low note and very, very gradually increase the pitch to reach a high note in unison, obliterating any tempered sort of steps, as smooth as we could make it. This was the critical, satisfying rendering of it”.

Delayed by fifty years, and now on record rather than a concert stage, some of Tintweiss’s vision of how to place the band is now realized, as *MarksTown* enters the universal marketplace of music. Followers in the avant-garde niche will dig these new additions, while listeners in a larger world are introduced to the beyond-category blend of *The Purple Why*.

Ben Young – Fall 2020



Bassist Steve Tintweiss has been part of the fabric of New York City’s modern jazz culture for decades. He has been composing avant-garde music, leading his own bands and producing concerts for over 50 years. You know him as a Sixties sideman on records with Patty Waters, Burton Greene, Frank Wright, Marzette Watts—and most notably Albert Ayler’s triumphant final tour of France at the Maeght Foundation in 1970.

*2019 marked the first publication of treasures from the voluminous Steve Tintweiss Archives on the INKY DoT MEDIA label. More of these meticulously remastered sounds will follow, from *The Purple Why*, *Inkwhite Tintweiss Group*, *Spacelight Band*, *Judy Stuart*, and other jazz artists.*

Stay tuned.

The Operation Airlift Biafra benefit was just that kind of multifarious showcase the group was conceived for, though in that instant the music needed to be compacted to fit with the program. As with any benefit, especially in the heat of summer and the crush of social forces (the benefit started on the day of the Soviet-Bloc-powers’ invasion of Czechoslovakia), chaos took precedence over orderliness. To accommodate the slippery schedule, Tintweiss was told that the show he had prepped for the group would need to be shortened significantly; no more than twenty minutes. He had to make a decision on the fly: The band could either perform all of maybe three pieces, or play a sort of truncated medley using short versions of all of the pieces on the setlist. He took the latter route, and we’re treated to a most unusual, overture-style version of a set.

Three weeks after the St. Mark’s appearance, the Purple Why was scheduled to appear at a more deliberate, framed event at Town Hall opposite the Burton Greene ensemble. In contrast to the setting at St. Mark’s, the Town Hall concert was surely a respectful and appropriate presentation recognizable to the particular audience (and small, by comparison) of The New Jazz.

Before and after this concert, Steve was the regular bassist for Burton Greene’s group, including the sessions for Greene’s third record—produced by John Hammond for Columbia Records (all but the Moog overdubs were complete by the concert date). With that project, Burton Greene had seemingly graduated into the big leagues, which no doubt helped back up the pitch to presenter Norman Seaman. Seaman produced the event at hand for his season subscribers.



Repertoire here is a blend of some durable and some unique items. Leader Tintweiss outlines the territory of the group: “It’s closest to free-form jazz but different because there’s a lot of compositions and tunes that are melodically based—some might even be more blues or rock-oriented.” “N.E.S.W. up/down”, boiling along in a jazz flow, may be the most widely traveled item out of both programs: It was in regular circulation for Tintweiss groups into the 1970s. With

so little of DuBoise's music on record there may be no use to keeping such statistics, but perhaps this is his finest solo published to date, and it matches well the kaleidoscopic side of Tintweiss's arco playing.

In contrast to that momentum, **"Contrapuntal"** is a series of careful, isolated statements from the members. DuBoise plays briefly in the mute, and in the piece's second half Tintweiss ignites the zither.

Superstructure for most of the pieces comes from their held lines rather than "rhythm-section" activity. With the horns as firmament, Cook's and Tintweiss's accents punch through as bursts and stabs. Throughout we get an up-close vision of Tintweiss's intoning and singing from the bass position. He is the harlequin and the soothsayer, in contrast to the ambient approach of Stuart and Sheffer. The acoustics of both spaces accentuate the ambience—the cushion of air between entities on stage, which underscores a particular sort of dramatic urgency.

Tintweiss's composing often commemorates the comings and goings in his personal life. One associate, Ramona, was named in a piece that carried on in the Purple Why library for some time after their personal relationship was still active. **"How Sweet?"** was aimed at a different person; and **"Just Be Mine"** still another. Tintweiss: "In those days there were a lot of alternate lifestyles. 'Hippie' was the common term that was used to describe people and the movement in general for years." Asked if **"Monogamy is Out"** relates to what history has enshrined as the Summer of Love, Tintweiss gives a different reading from his experience. "The whole second half of the 60s was a time of cultural and societal experimentation; it didn't have any season. Free Love was a time in which the standard expectations were all breaking down—growing up and having monogamous relationships and getting married... 'Monogamy is Out' was my own take on it. For me personally it was a difficult expression: My girlfriend wasn't too happy about singing the lyric at subsequent events. It was espousing this as a serious change in the norms."

Musically, **"Ramona, I Love You"** comes on with an organic sort of inevitability. **"Monogamy Is Out"** epitomizes the doing-less-with more approach to textual matters in Tintweiss's songs. For many of his pieces, the body of the lyric is really just one or two lines. There may be a back-story associated with these figures, but those details aren't expounded in the lyrics. Instead, the texts of these pieces are meteoric fireballs that generate thrust through the ricochet on stage, voices volleyed into a central frenzy. Contrasting the Town Hall performances with those from the St. Mark's benefit also illuminates just how much of the development of these pieces was truncated due to the time constraints. In **"Monogamy Is Out"** there's time for a fully developed solo sequence: Judy Stuart's voice first; after a laserlight solo by Mark Whitecage Amy Sheffer takes the second vocal segment before melting into the ensemble lyrics outhead.

Purple Why Theme had been written in 1965 by the bassist when still a teenager, back before the group even congealed. Like the surprising theme music chosen by Woody Herman, Artie Shaw and others, it works remarkably well to have this slow-moving, suspenseful line as the signature announcement for the group. It was also programmed into computer music code.

For the new piece **"Universal Heroes"**, special to the Town Hall concert, the leader reaches for melodic—yet another instrument from his arsenal—to define the free-floating environment.

Koehler shows up most prominently on **"Just Be Mine"**, where the cascading unity of DuBoise and Tintweiss's partnership is a highlight. The spatial dissociation among drums, bass, voice, soloist makes for a unique soundstage: Whitecage and the singers' voices project to the room, reflecting back an envelope for the continuing vocal commentary from Tintweiss.

Says the composer: "I was always interested in outer space and exploration; that was foremost in my consciousness as an artist. Sometimes I would have the title first, even before I composed the piece." So it was with **"Space Rocks"**, which was formally premiered at this Town Hall concert. "Each musician had a written part—it was a contrapuntal type of piece. Then there are time-