

Surrealestate: A Short Introduction

In 1977, Bob Reigle and Surrealestate released a LP. I haven't heard it. In the 1990s, as a graduate student at UCLA, Robert Reigle formed a new Surrealestate, an amorphous improvising collective. Many adventurous L.A. players passed through this band, some on their way to careers in jazz, such as Todd Sickafoose and Mark and Alan Ferber. This Surrealestate recorded *Contrafactum*, appeared on parts of Robert's *Tenor Saxophone* and *The Marriage of Heaven and Earth* (all on Acoustic Levitation), and is featured in David Borgo's book *Sync or Swarm*.

I met David Martinelli through our online writing: mine on Albert Ayler, his on Sun Ra, and contacted him in 2000 when I moved back to Los Angeles. Since I've been in the band, the grad student members have all finished their degrees and we've moved from being an unofficial UCLA band to a more-or-less regular group of players from the L.A. underground. I met Bruce Friedman and Ken Luey in improvisation workshops and brought them aboard. Robert Reigle took a teaching job in Turkey in the early 2000s but rejoins us whenever he's in town.

This Third Millennium Surrealestate appears on tracks of Cristian Amigo's *L.A. Live Sessions* (Big As Records) and *Kingdom of Jones* (Innova) and on the Soundwalk 2005 compilation. We played the Long Beach Soundwalk for a few years, I hustled us a series of shows at several downtown art spaces, Bruce organized a Stockhausen memorial concert, and Jonathon Grasse has featured us on concerts of his compositions, including site-specific works.

Surrealestate has used various types of scores, but improvisation has always been the core of our practice. This disc contains selections from two nights of free playing. I hope you dig it.

-Jeff Schwartz



The risks and rewards of spontaneously conceived, improvised music are passed around, shared in the moment between musicians and ensemble, and ultimately to the listener. There is no way around the sound. What each player brings stays in the web. This collection titled *Aporias* follows Surrealestate's 2010 release *Lacunae*: the mystery of the missing parts followed by unanswerable questions. Stylistic concerns aside, bring your imagination along because interpretive listening is a part of this creative challenge, and adjectives are not optional when dealing with one's senses.

The group's large ensemble sound was captured in the 2000 release *Contractatum*. A decade's worth of change was thus indirectly chronicled by the sextet on *Lacunae*. Recorded the very next day without in-demand bassist Jeff Schwartz, *Aporias* features a quintet. We weave some serious polyphony. Yet no texture dominates. In extemporaneous fashion, passages glide between almost compositional results, tight and balanced in form, and those sounding totally free, stretching boundaries of cohesion.

Creative music, a moniker of the avant-garde often used for what is not jazz, not contemporary classical or world music yet challenging some of those same spirits, celebrates the freedom of individual expression through improvisation and passionate experimentation. Listening to these tracks two years after the session, members of the group selectively commented on uncanny ensemble gestures, individual whims and responses, and some of those beautiful zones between.

- Jonathon Grasse