

FIRE MUSIC

THE STORY OF FREE JAZZ

firemusic.org



Baron Wolman Collection,
Rock and Roll Hall of Fame



“Crammed with exhilarating sounds, moving reminiscences and stimulating arguments that [Free Jazz] is not just music, but vital music... [some] highlights are incredibly well-curated archival footage and contemporary interviews that allow the viewer to briefly commune with some beautiful souls... This movie constituted a too-short heaven on earth.” - **Glenn Kenny**

The New York Times

“Fascinating... In the documentary Fire Music, the hostile reaction that met the unusual genre soon turns into deep appreciation and a lasting influence.” - **Jim Farber**

theguardian

“Fire Music provides a concise, thoughtful account of the musical form which first blossomed in the late 1950s. The documentary does an excellent job of making the music come alive with its gripping performance footage and incisive interviews with many key players... The film should be on any serious music lover’s must-see list.” - **Frank Scheck**

Hollywood Reporter

“Fire Music sets a new benchmark. The film clearly lays out how the original wave of free jazz evolved from what came before and how, for a brief yet indelible period, yielded a wealth of music that’s still unparalleled in its gritty intensity and deep spiritual resonance. Thanks to Tom Surgal, we have a record of what it felt like to be there.” - **Hank Shteamer**

Rolling Stone

“Surgal makes a compelling case that free jazz, too often dismissed as noise, deserves far more attention than it receives... The film tells the compelling stories of the courageous, visionary musicians... Appropriately, director Surgal lets the music and the artists tell the free jazz story.” - **Chris Bisha**



“A loving documentary... This is a no-brainer for anybody who listens to experimental music... But the film’s success isn’t just about content; it’s about how this challenging music is translated to a visual medium. Fortunately, with ambitious editing, appropriate vintage footage and lively interviews, this fires on all cylinders... There’s so much good music – and conversation – here that it’s hard to resist.” - **Pat Padua**

SPECTRUM CULTURE

“A kinetic, often thrilling re-contextualizing of the Free Jazz movement, Fire Music breathes new life into the most experimental section in jazz... Thrilling archival footage plays as the real star of the film... Surgal proves to be a superb storyteller here, carrying throughout the film’s much too brief 88 minute runtime a propulsive energy that, while not perfectly mimicking the energy of the movement he hopes to discuss in the film, at least brings to life the spirit at its very core... Utterly essential viewing...” - **Josh Brunsting**



*** 9 out of 10 ***

“Brilliantly engaging... A comprehensive overview of the major players in this wild, unrelenting scene... If you’re a kid just getting into avant-garde free jazz and wondering which records to buy, this is a hell of a place to start... A fascinating examination of the origins and the subsequent outbreak of some of the most compelling, challenging, and confrontational music ever to be performed in the past hundred years... Whether you’re already into this stuff or just dipping your toe into the Kool-Aid, Fire Music delivers all the brimstone and more.” - **Chuck Foster**

FILM THREAT

“There is much to like about this lovingly put together history of the so-called free jazz... A cast list such as Surgal assembled will be enough to pique the attention of aficionados, and that attention will be rewarded... A valuable addition to an inadequately chronicled musical and extra-musical phenomenon.” - **Chris May**

All About Jazz

“Surgal’s doc not only shows brilliant footage of those greats, but it also includes fascinating commentary by the eminent (and witty) critic Gary Giddins and such surviving musicians from that time... Fire Music isn’t for everyone, but it is an important film to have been made.” - **Marc Glassman**

POV
POINT OF VIEW MAGAZINE

“An immersive primer told from the performers’ perspectives. It’s a rich and highly spirited account, driven by candid and extremely “real” interviews.” - **Steve Dollar**

FILMMAKER