

The Ex

The Ex have defied categorization ever since they started playing in 1979. Born out of the punk explosion, when anything and everything was possible, the band have still managed to retain both curiosity and passion for their music. Using guitars, bass, drums and voice as their starting point The Ex have continued to musically explore undiscovered areas right up to the present day: the early 1980s saw collaborations with jazz musicians and an Iraqi-Kurdish band. In the 90s the group found a myriad of partners from varied musical and non-musical backgrounds including Kamagurka, Tom Cora, Sonic Youth, Han Bennink, Jan Mulder, Shellac and Wolter Wierbos.

In 2002 The Ex set up a lively musical exchange with Ethiopia, which eventually led to two CD recordings and hundreds of concerts with the legendary saxophonist Getatchew Mekuria including two concerts in the USA one in the Millennium Park in Chicago and one in the Lincoln Centre in New York. . Most recent collaborations include projects with Brass Unbound (featuring Mats Gustafsson, Ken Vandermark, Roy Paci, Ab Baars and Wolter Wierbos) and Ethiopian Azmari group Fendika.

After 36 years, more than 25 albums and around 1800 performances the band continues to work as they did in when they began, completely independent of record companies, managers or roadies. Because of this 'do it yourself' work ethic The Ex is still a great example for other forward-thinking bands and musicians.

THE EX & KEN VANDERMARK

The Ex and Ken Vandermark have a long history together going back to 2003 when Ken and Hamid Drake joined The Ex onstage at the Empty Bottle in Chicago. In the last 5 years Ken has joined The Ex for many projects: *The Ex & Brass Unbound*, The Ex & Getachew Mekuria's *Moa Anbessa* and also for a side project with Terrie Ex, Andy Moor and Paal Nilssen-Love called *Lean Left*.

Ken versatility and skill as a player and a great listener makes him on the one hand a great team player offering wonderfully catchy driving melodiea and basslines with his baritone and tenor sax, and on the other side a fantastic improviser contributing intense and exciting solos over The Ex's rhythmic cacophony. Always a pleasure to work with countless musical ideas and a sense of humor that keeps the Ex on their toes.