

## An Afternoon of Zimprovisation

By Phoenix Hamilton

I had the distinct pleasure of attending a live performance that was billed as “Zimbabwe presents improvisation from a drummers’ perspective with members of ZIMPROV.” In addition to the intriguing billing, the venue was an interesting choice as well. St. Margaret, an episcopal Anglican church was the place listed for the performance. This performance was led by Zimbabwe Hamilton, an internationally known drummer who worked with the late great Charles Earland and a list of other well-known artist.

His sound presentation included a percussionist – Kewu Oya, a trumpet player – Donald Richards and of course Zimbabwe aka Zim. Zim introduced the workshop demonstration by saying that he starts every performance with one goal; to connect rhythms to the elements in a spiritual way. He then fired up the sanctuary with energetic bursts from the snare and tom toms and complimentary zaps of kinetic eruptions with the cymbals. Afterwards, he set a groove and the other musicians pick up on this sound wave; the result was a wave of rigorous funky music.

Zim followed this with a more contemplative manner: his cymbal work took the lead on this section. He played the cymbals in a reflective manner and there was a hush of reverence for this communication between Zim and God. It was obvious that the entire audience felt as if they were observing a man praying in thanksgiving with angels at his side.

The next in this installation of the eclectic presentation included sound scapes and building rhythms. Kewu Oya played an outstanding featured role in the first part followed an equally impressive solo salute by Don Richards. There were recognizable salutes to old standards, Miles Davis compositions and African beats.

At one point, audience members were invited to participate in a “jam”. It turned out that the two participants were Men from Nigeria, Africa (Yoruba tribe); their contributions ignited the crowd. Prince Mason Ashaye and his fellow country man Dele Yesufu obviously enjoyed the jam and were well received.

The final performance started with a 3 minute drum solo from Zimbabwe. Although it was apparent that Zim had a very distinctive style; shades of Art Blakey, Elvin Jones as well as Roy Haynes were apparent. Zim ended his solo with a flourish of invigorating sound emitting from the drum kit and he played the last 30 seconds on his feet, as if in complete adoration and reverence to the moment.