

KEN VANDERMARK - ISTVÁN GRENCŐS - RÓBERT BENKŐ



HUNNIA RECORDS

BURNING RIVER MELTING SEA

KEN VANDERMARK

tenor saxophone, Bb clarinet (*right side*)

ISTVÁN GRENC SÓ

tenor & alto saxophones, Bb & bass clarinet, flute (*left side*)

RÓBERT BENKŐ

double bass

The background of the page is an abstract composition of vertical stripes in shades of blue, green, and red. The stripes are of varying widths and colors, creating a textured, painterly effect. The blue stripe is the widest and occupies the central portion of the image. To its left is a narrower green stripe, and to its right is a red stripe. The colors are somewhat muted and blended at the edges, giving it a soft, artistic feel.

Burning River Melting Sea, was created during a week of work with the Grensó Collective that included concerts at the Saalfelden 3 Tage Jazz 2020 in Austria, as well as performances in Hungary at the BMC/Opus Jazz Club in Budapest and at the Grand Café in Szeged. During this period Grensó and Vandermark also developed new duo compositions for a recording project organized by Hunnia Records and held at SuperSize Studio just outside of Budapest. The opportunities to work together with the Collective, and in a special project that took place at Lumen in Budapest during March of 2019 (that combined Hungarian musicians with Chicagoans Andrew Clinkman, Steve Marquette, Macie Stewart, and Phil Sudderberg), deepened the rapport between the two artists even further. Their inspiring and unique synergy can be heard throughout Burning River Melting Sea, which- in addition to a half dozen new compositions by Grensó and Vandermark- includes five open trio improvisations with Grensó's longtime collaborator, legendary Hungarian bassist, Róbert Benkő.



As I write these words in Chicago during May of 2020 and look back on the week of activity in January that led to these recordings with István Grensó and Róbert Benkő, it's hard for me to comprehend that the tour scheduled at that time would most likely be the last series of concerts that I play in 2020. Without warning the world changed for everyone between those months, and it's very hard to predict how things will look in the future, for music and for everything else.

My work with István began exactly two years earlier, when he invited me to collaborate with his ensemble, the Grensó Collective. We both composed music for the project, performed in Hungary, and recorded the album *Do Not Slam The Door* for BMC Records. I learned a lot about improvised music in Hungary during that week, particularly the history connected to György Szabados. It was a great starting point, and I knew that there would be more work to do with István in the future. In March of 2019 my group Marker did a night of collaborative performances with musicians in Budapest, and István was an important part of that evening.

Then an invitation came from Mario Steidl, director of the Saalfelden Jazz Festival, for the Grensó Collective to come with me as a guest to participate on the 3 Tage Jazz 2020, which would be held in the middle of January. It was clear to all of us that we should take advantage of this opportunity to arrange some additional shows, and Mario graciously agreed to enable this. In addition to that concert, and with the help of Benedek Kruchió, who has been central to the success of all the plans that have involved István and me, the Collective also played again in Hungary, at the BMC/Opus Jazz Club in Budapest and at the Grand Café in Szeged. A recording session and duo concert (which took place at Meseház, in Békéscsaba) were also scheduled. István and I composed new music for this project and rehearsed together in the gaps between the other performances.



The SuperSize Studio was located on the outskirts of Budapest, in Törökbalint, and both it and the sound engineers were excellent. We recorded all the new duo pieces and a series of trio improvisations that included Róbert Benkő on double bass; those were performed in front of an audience brought in by the label, Hunnia Records. Though it was a pleasure to return to the material that the Collective performed, working on the new compositions was really exhilarating and displayed how far the level of communication between István and me had come. Though our collaborations had been occasional over the two years since first meeting, the creative process we've shared has kept accelerating.

The evidence of that progress is documented on this album. Both the compositions and the improvisations, whether duo or trio, exhibit a depth of creative understanding that was impossible on our initial encounter. This communication transcended the music, and it transcended language as well. It's in all we've shared as István and I view the world and encounter music together, laughing in the car as we drove from Saalfelden to Budapest with his band, across the Hungarian countryside, sitting in the bar outside of Meseház, eating lunch in his home with Benedek and Denise (István's wife). This shared enthusiasm for music, art, and life is projected into plans we've made to put a quartet project together that would expand this new duo material. Originally the idea was to meet in the autumn of 2020. As I sit here now in Chicago, considering the landscape for concerts and touring as it may exist several months in the future, I am doubtful. But I do know this - István and I will get together again, we will bring this new ensemble on the road, and the music we make will be better than ever.

Ken Vandermark
Chicago, May 12, 2020



Track List

01. Extracted color*	3:11
02. How good it would be ...***	3:56
03. A question of rate****	2:25
04. Letters in any order**	1:05
05. Rise lonesome*	5:15
06. Engarian-Hunglish***	2:34
07. Woven paper ****	3:28
08. Like a jaguar loves its spots*	5:21
09. Object 2020*	3:49
10. 2128 ½ South Indiana Avenue****	3:24
11. Ode to women*****	4:36
12. Anagram or acronym*	2:02
13. At a table of togetherness***	3:29
14. Triple Weaving *	6:18
Total time:	50:33

Róbert Benkő, István Grencsó & Ken Vandermark (Twenty First Mobile Music / ASCAP - Cien Fuegos)*

István Grencsó & Ken Vandermark (Twenty First Mobile Music / ASCAP - Cien Fuegos)**

István Grencsó (BIEM - Artisjus)***

Ken Vandermark (Twenty First Mobile Music / ASCAP - Cien Fuegos)****

György Szabados*****

KEN VANDERMARK - ISTVÁN GRENCÓ - RÓBERT BENKŐ

BURNING RIVER MELTING SEA

Live recording at the **SuperSize Recording Studio**, Hungary, 19th January, 2020

Balance and recording engineers: **András Makay, Dexter, Gábor Halász**

Recorded audio format: **8 channel Native DSD 256** (Pyramix, Merging Hapi)

Mastering engineer: **Tom Caulfield**

Cover art: **Nikolett Kovats** - Connections III

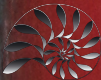
Photo by **Krisztina Csendes**

Producer: **Róbert Zoltán Hunka**

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