



**BETWEEN THE NOTES:
EXTRAORDINARY
IMPROVISATIONS
(FMRCD234-0707)**

Matthew Barley (cello, director),
Paul Griffiths (guitar),
Fraser Trainer (piano/keyboards),
Sam Walton (percussion),
Peter Whyman (clarinet & saxophone)



8. Almscliff Crag (Keith Preece)

This CD was made after a competition ran in the BBC Music Magazine to find ideas on which to base improvisations - the idea was to explore how music can come from non-musical sources like concepts, words, pictures and so on. We asked for entries in 9 categories and we chose our favourite one of each, then recorded two or three versions of each, then picked the best one to be on the disc. There was no editing at all.

All the music on this CD was recorded in a day using ideas sent in by the public as entries to a competition in the BBC Music Magazine. It was part of a feature about improvisation and how classical musicians are improvising in more and more different contexts.

1. Water was from the category of **Food or Drink**, and sent in by Keith Preece. We were half way through the day of recording, just about to do an improvisation based on one of the pictures, and without any warning a great rainstorm blew up outside, with rain drumming down on the studio roof. Sam said, "Maybe this would be a good moment to do *Water*", and we all silently nodded, and did. You can hear the rain at the beginning, as you can half way through, but by the end it had stopped as suddenly as it came. As the most spontaneous of all tracks, it seemed a good one to open the CD with.

2. Two Characters: this was another very spontaneous one. There was a category for **A meeting of two famous people** but we weren't inspired by any of the entries. Then Fraser on prepared piano (a piece of paper left on the strings inside), and Paul on guitar said they both had a character in mind to do an impro but they kept secret who it was...

3. Connection, intersection, rejection, introspection. This **Short Story** entry was from Ethel Robinson in South Africa. All the stories we had were a good paragraph long, and there were some fascinating ones, but this one caught our imagination with its simplicity.

4. Chord Sequence. We particularly liked this **Chord Sequence** entry from Ennio Paola in Canada because it was so un-BTN which made it fun to work with. It was also the only musical starting point for an improvisation

5. Bi Polar was the suggestion of Paul Brazier in Gloucestershire and the winner for the **Single Word**. Somehow it interested us all - it seemed like there were obvious musical possibilities there.

6. Scatterbrain. This was the winner for the **Emotional State** category, and came from Robert Hæl in Scottish Perthshire. We loved this idea, maybe as a group we are quite scatterbrained, although as individuals only Sam is.

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TRACKLISTING:

1. Water
2. Two Characters
3. Connection, intersection, rejection, introspection
4. Chord Sequence
5. Bi Polar
6. Scatterbrain
7. Torchnote
8. Almscliff Crag
9. Clarinet solo
10. Mindwander
11. Intransigent
12. Lake Garda

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7. **Torchnote**, the winner for the **Poem** category also came from Robert, like the word from track 6. As an exercise we decided to read it in unison, and base the playing on the rhythm of the words, but when listening back we thought the preparation exercise was quite interesting too, so that is also included. In the spoken version we all did a free section at each hyphen, but in the played version we took solos instead.

8. **Almscliff Crag** is a beautiful location in Yorkshire and the photo supplied by Keith Preece was the winner of the **Geographical Feature** category. We had an instant feel for this photo, and Paul in particular felt something "folky" was brought out in the music; you can hear this in his guitar sound and playing.

9. **Clarinet solo**. We thought we would all try a solo at the end of the day as well. Only Pete's and Fraser's (track 11) made the CD... This one by Pete was completely free.

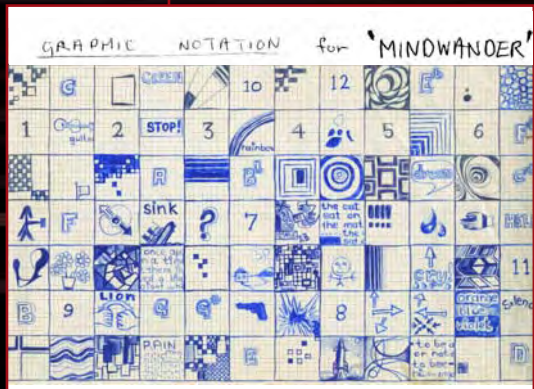
10. **Mindwander**. **Graphic Score** entry. This had been a category for young children, but was entered by Trevor Taylor, who is, it has to be said, a little over 12 years old. In fact Trevor runs the record company that this disc is on, and we were delighted that he had produced a graphic score in the 70s that he offered us to use, as no children at all had entered this category.

11. **Intransigent** was the **Single Word** that Fraser chose to inspire his improvised solo. He expresses the meaning of this word - it is a part of Fraser's character that we, um, particularly love. This single word was not the winner of this category, but it was sent in by Robert Hæl.

12. **Lake Garda** was the chosen entry from the **Photograph Category** from triple winner Keith Preece. This was the very first track we recorded in the session, and here is offered as the final one on the disc. I particularly like the ending, and the way we are all waiting for each other at the beginning!

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12. Lake Garda (Keith Preece)



10. Graphic Score (Trevor Taylor)

