



Home » The Wire » July 2011  
page: 46

### ***Old Sights New Sounds***

Incus CD

In the wake of Derek Bailey, Incus Records continues under the assured guidance of Karen Brookman. *Old Sights New Sounds* is a mouthwatering dialogue of reeds from October 2010; Lol Coxhill's soprano saxophone and Alex Ward's clarinet conspiring across generations. Coxhill's tone and phrasing are instantly recognisable, yet the sudden switches, leaps, twists and turns of his music remain wonderfully unpredictable. He may be a less vigorous player than in former years, less inclined to embark on lengthy spiralling arabesques, but his resourceful imagination and agility still make for exhilarating listening. Although Ward may lack the bald soprano's indelible identity, he conjures a comparably wide and mobile range of expressive voicings from his clarinet, conveying all the while the intimate feel of thinking aloud in music. Coxhill has appeared in many varied contexts over the years but this partnership with Ward, with its conversational phrasing, quicksilver reactions, artful correspondences and finely balanced interplay, seems just right for the musician he is now. The CD's seven tracks run to a little under 43 minutes, old-fashioned LP length but also just right for eavesdropping on this kind of sociable exchange. Altogether a treat. Now whatever happened to that tantalisingly unreleased duo session Coxhill recorded years ago with tenor legend Bobby Wellins...?

**Julian Cowley**