



drawing by Geoffrey Winston, June 2023 at Cafe Oto London

## **BUTCHER / LEHN**

JOHN BUTCHER - saxophones

THOMAS LEHN - analogue synthesizer

Since first meeting in London in 1996 saxophonist John Butcher and analogue synthesizer player Thomas Lehn have collaborated in a remarkably wide range of projects. These include the long standing trio *Thermal*, with guitarist Andy Moor from "The EX" and two groups with very distinctive pianists - John Tilbury (noted for his work with AMM, Cornelius Cardew, Morton Feldman a.o.) and US avant-jazz musician Matthew Shipp (David S. Ware, William Parker, Roscoe Mitchell).

During all this time they have continued to give duo concerts, valuing this format for exploring the intimate interactions possible within their acoustic and electronic worlds.

"This is a magical journey in sounds, ideas and textures. Butcher has developed his own profound method of playing the saxophones. He converses in his own individual syntax, still radiating a surprising playfulness and commanding elegance. Lehn's highly inventive, often aggressive playing of the synthesizer introduces elements of danger and surprise and adds textual references to psychedelia, and sixties electronic experimentation."

- **Salt Peanuts**

"Thomas Lehn has radically reclaimed the synthesizer for spontaneity. He runs tightropes between control and accident. His collaborators are liable to find themselves on untried ground, dependent upon sharp reflexes and tangential intuitions. Saxophonist John Butcher, tempered in the unorthodox, has the technical cunning and listening skills to meet the challenge Lehn poses."

- **The Wire**

"Butcher and Lehn are both committed improvisers, and each has worked determinedly against instrumental prescriptions. The former has used soprano and tenor saxes to manage sounds most commonly accessed with the use of electronics, and the latter has confined himself to older, analogue synths that respond to the human touch."

- **Magnet**



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## JOHN BUTCHER

Butcher is well known as a saxophonist who attempts to engage with the uniqueness of time and place. His music ranges through improvisation, his own compositions, multitracked pieces and explorations with feedback and extreme acoustics. His "Resonant Spaces" CD is a collection of site-specific performances recorded during a tour of unusual locations in Scotland and the Orkney Islands. Since the early 80s he has collaborated with hundreds of artists - including Derek Bailey, Eddie Prévost, Spontaneous Music Ensemble, Steve Beresford, Okkyung Lee, Andy Moor, Christian Marclay, Phil Minton, Rhodri Davies, Tony Buck, Magda Mayas and Matthew Shipp. Additionally he values occasional encounters - from the WDR Sinfonieorchester and EX Orkest to duos with Akio Suzuki, Liz Allbee, Keiji Haino, David Toop, Sophie Agnel, Fred Frith and Joe McPhee. Recent compositions include "Penny Wands" for Futurist Intonarumori, three HCMF commissions, "Good Liquor..." for the London Sinfonietta and "Tarab Cuts" (shortlisted for a British Composer's Award). - [www.johnbutcher.org.uk](http://www.johnbutcher.org.uk)

"Extraordinarily powerful, Butcher's saxophone may test the limits of one's ear to make sense of the close and complex relationships that are put forth, but there's an undeniable emotional depth and sheer beauty in his work that supersedes technicality and concept."

- **Tiny Mix Tapes**

John Butcher is without question the most jaw-dropping technician we've ever heard wielding a tenor, equally capable of brawny assault and textural meditations at the very edge of audibility. What makes him so compelling, though, is the taste and poetry behind everything he does."

- **Time Out, New York**

## THOMAS LEHN

For more than three decades Thomas Lehn has been one of the most innovative and successful musical personalities in the field of electro-acoustic music in the areas between improvisation and composition. With his performances and productions of (live) electronic music with the EMS Synthi A, he has reached an international audience, performed at major festivals for contemporary music and been involved in projects sponsored and/or supported by Goethe Institutes around the world. Long-standing collaborations include ensembles such as *Konk Pack*, *TOOT*, *Thermal*, *MIMEO*, *Speak Easy*, and duos with Marcus Schmickler, Tiziana Bertoncini and Gerry Hemingway; more recent collaborations include two trios with John Butcher and pianists John Tilbury and Matthew Shipp, *LDL* with Urs Leimgruber and Jacques Demierre, and *Companion Species* in duo with Jennifer Walshe. Thomas Lehn is a founding member of the *ensembleJh[ia]tus* for interpretation and improvisation which has premiered commissioned works by Peter Jakober, Vinko Globokar, Anthony Pateras, Jennifer Walshe and Jürg Frey. As a synthesizer interpreter, he has realized electronic works by Éliane Radigue, Roman Haubenstock-Ramati, Bogusław Schaeffer and Zbigniew Karkowski and was soloist in the world premiere of Peter Jakober's *dort* with Klangforum Wien at musikprotiokoll as well as in the CD recording of Christopher Fox' *Topophony* with the WDR Symphony Orchestra under Ilan Volkov. In his new solo project SYNKLAVIA, he unites his long-time companions - the piano and the analog synthesizer - in an interactive fusion into one instrument. - [www.thomaslehn.com](http://www.thomaslehn.com)

"Thomas Lehn's ancient analogue synthesizer is an honestly electronic sound source, but he plays it with pianistic animation, a responsive improviser in an ever-shifting, fluid and powerful music."

- **Coda Magazine**

"Thomas Lehn's synthesizer, built at an early age of the technology, and looking more like a physics device than a musical instrument, was able to bridge the contradiction between technology and nature. Indeed, there was something extremely natural about the sounds it produced."

- **Weserkurier**