



## **BILLY BANG**

### **Da Bang!**

TUM CD 034

*01 Da Bang / 02 Guinea / 03 Daydreams / 04 Law Years /  
05 All Blues / 06 St. Thomas*

**Billy Bang** violin

**Dick Griffin** trombone

**Andrew Bemkey** piano

**Hilliard Greene** double bass

**Newman Taylor-Baker** drums

**European release:** August 12, 2013

*Da Bang!* was recorded in February 2011, just two months before the master violinist **Billy Bang** (1947–2011) succumbed to cancer. In this final session, the **Billy Bang Group** featured one extended composition by Bang, “Daydreams,” as well as compositions by some of Bang’s favorite musicians, including Barry Altschul, Don Cherry, Ornette Coleman, Miles Davis and Sonny Rollins.

The rehearsals for, and the two days of recording of, **Da Bang!** were followed by a performance by the *Billy Bang Group* at TUMfest11 in Helsinki, Finland, that Bang closed with his rendition of “St. Thomas,” just like he does on this recording. He did so with his usual final flourish, which was caught in a photograph that can be seen in the beginning of the booklet for the album. Sadly, that was also the last note Billy ever played in public. Soon after returning to New York, Bang was re-admitted to the hospital where he was being treated for the cancer originally diagnosed in 2009 and there it was discovered that the cancer had spread to his liver. In April 2011, Bang passed away.

For **Da Bang!**, the **Billy Bang Group** featured legendary trombonist **Dick Griffin** as well as Bang’s regular accompanists in his final period, pianist **Andrew Bemkey**, bassist **Hilliard Greene** and drummer **Newman Taylor-Baker**. Griffin is a veteran of the groups of multi-instrumentalist Rahsaan Roland Kirk and inter-galactic band leader Sun Ra whereas Bemkey, Greene and Taylor-Baker have all been active on the New York scene for a number of years.

For **Da Bang!**, Bang chose music that was composed by some of the people he greatly admired and that he particularly enjoyed performing. During the sessions, Bang talked about the healing power of this music. He also talked about giving back through his music to some of the people who had inspired and supported him. As a result, **Da Bang!** can be seen as Bang’s final dedication to the music he loved.

**Da Bang!** is a follow-up to the **Billy Bang Group**’s first recording for TUM Records (*Prayer for Peace*, TUM CD 018, in 2005), which featured trumpeter James Zollar in place of Dick Griffin and bassist Todd Nicholson in place of Hilliard Greene. TUM Records has also released a critically acclaimed studio recording by the *FAB Trio*, Bang’s co-operative group with bassist Joe Fonda and drummer Barry Altschul (*History Of Jazz In Reverse*, TUM CD 028, in 2005).

**Billy Bang** (1945-2011), who was born in Mobile, Alabama but raised in New York City, began his career during the peak years of New York City’s “loft jazz” era in the 1970s. In addition to his own *Survival Ensemble*, Bang collaborated with the likes of Denis Charles, Frank Lowe, Lawrence “Butch” Morris, William Parker and Sam Rivers, among others. He first became internationally known as a member of the *String Trio of New York* in the late 1970s and went on to lead a number of his own groups. Bang, a Vietnam veteran himself, was brought to the attention of a broader audience by his two Vietnam-themed recordings (*Vietnam: The Aftermath* in 2001 and *Vietnam: Reflections* in 2004). With almost 30 albums released under his own leadership and many more by various cooperative endeavors, including five highly acclaimed albums with the *String Trio of New York*, five with the *FAB Trio* and two with *Tri-Factor*, Billy Bang was one of the more prolific musicians of his generation. In addition to being a beautiful recording in its own right and a stellar addition to his discography, **Da Bang!** serves as an ample reminder of why Billy Bang was considered a true master of his chosen instrument and one of the undisputed leaders of his generation of improvising musicians.

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**TUM Records** is a Finnish record label that began operations in May 2003. TUM produces high-quality music recordings and selectively organizes concerts and events, such as the TUMfest in Helsinki. The focus of TUM is on improvised, jazz-based music, placing particular emphasis on free expression and the performing artists’ own music. In addition to providing younger musicians with exposure and a musical platform, TUM promotes more experienced musicians whose work is not favored by the commercial trends of our time. TUM covers feature works by leading Finnish artists. [www.tumrecords.com](http://www.tumrecords.com)

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