

Shards

The art of recording is an art of paradoxes: the studio, a private space for making sound public, a physical space for constructing an imaginary aural space; the session, a fixed span of time played back, repeated, in rooms, cars, headphones, the future, forever; the tape machine or the computer, a locus of temporal displacement. Jason Moran, BlankFor.ms, and Marcus Gilmore enter that paradoxical zone with the improviser's confidence that its silence is a blank canvas. They foreground these temporal, spatial, and material disjunctures, speed them up, and compress them into this record's central drama, the piano and drums folding into each other and themselves, looping back and forth between sound, data, past, future - information moving at the lightning speed of musicians' minds.

Every chord, every touch of the drum stick to skin or metal, every infinitesimal adjustment of a digital echo's grainy blur is a musical mark in three virtual dimensions, one of many gestures accruing into the multifaceted, invisible artwork that emerges into the listener's mind as this record plays.

If their first record *Refract*, as the title suggests, bent the trio's sound as a prism does light, *Shards* is a oneness of performance and transformation, transformation as performance. As Moran and Gilmore play, BlankFor.ms records microfragments of time and sends them back to his collaborators sped up, slowed down, reversed, broken into ever tinier grains of data, and smeared into a sparkling blur. Moran and Gilmore receive glimpses into their immediate past, or even further back in time, like they're playing into a broken mirror – not just cracked in its visual plane, but in the sense of its shards shattering time and light, showing them past and future.

The trio gathers those pieces and puts them back together into improvisations with the organic unity of paintings – but paintings that are also collages, like Jack Whitten assembling bits of translucent dried acrylic into his monumental sculptural mosaics. On this record, we hear that process of hardening, fracturing, and rebuilding happening live, up close, with every splinter of time brought to the surface of our ears' perception. In *Shards*, these three artists make music of intimate expansiveness out of embodied histories, time, and technology.

Ted Reichman







All compositions by
Marcus Gilmore, Jason Moran, Tyler Gilmore

Jason Moran is a Steinway & Sons artist