

Bio information: **ROBERT CREELEY | CHRIS MASSEY | STEVE SWALLOW | DAVID TORN | DAVID CAST**  
Title: "**HAVE WE TOLD YOU ALL WE'D THOUGHT TO KNOW?**" (Cuneiform Rune 144)

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**FILE UNDER: JAZZ / SPOKEN WORD**

**Robert Creeley**, writer, teacher, and editor of the legendary *Black Mountain Review*, is one of America's greatest poets. The recipient of numerous poetry awards, Creeley is recognized as one of the "Rebel Poets of the 1950's" and as a link between the Black Mountain school, the San Francisco Renaissance, and the Beat poets of Greenwich Village. As the 21<sup>st</sup> century opens, the prolific poet is receiving recognition from a broader segment of the public than ever before. In October 2000, the technology magazine *Wired* discussed his recent publication: "Creeley's wonderful *Day Book of a Virtual Poet* is a unique marriage of the lyrical and the digital." And an exhibition of his collaborations with visual artists, accompanied by a catalogue, *In Company*, which features a CD-ROM, has been touring art museums across America from April 1999 to June 2001.

Besides his collaborations with visual artists, Creeley has also worked on several projects with jazz musicians, a natural outgrowth of his life-long interest in jazz. He has long acknowledged his debt to jazz. In her essay on Creeley's early career, Cynthia D. Edelberg noted that:

"He learned from the jazz cult that "you can write directly from that which you feel." These musicians, who experimented with rhythm and silence, showed him "how subtle" and "how refined that expression might be."  
And in an interview with Mong-Lan in 1999, Creeley stated that:

"In jazz I found much more instruction as to how to manage rhythm, how to make a line, call it, and keep an active pattern – "how to dance sitting down," in Charles Olson's phrase. Charlie Parker, Miles Davis, Thelonius Monk, Bud Powell, Max Roach and many others before them and after were really my source and instruction. There is so much emphasis put upon what poems "are saying." Yet it is only in the way poems are "saying" anything that I find them interesting. Otherwise love's love, eggs eggs, water wet. "Listen to the sound that it makes," Pound emphasized – so I did."

It is fitting that while jazz music has long influenced Creeley's writing, his poetry is now influencing jazz. Several of Creeley's musical collaborations have involved **Steve Swallow**, whose recent ECM release featured songs written to Creeley's poems. Swallow told *All About Jazz*:

"...I wrote music to poetry by Robert Creeley (*Home* ECM). He's been my favorite poet for all my adult life... it occurred to me that his poetry which I'd been reading intensively might jump start the writing process for me. I typed out some of my favorites of his poems...and pasted them up on the piano. Sure enough in short order they did start to provoke melodic phrases which also implied harmonies...I was off and running.... I expect I'll return to writing to words periodically because I enjoy it...."

"Have We Told You All You'd Thought To Know?" is a live recording of a 1998 performance by Creeley and four jazz musicians at Hallwalls Contemporary Arts Center in Buffalo, NY. Unlike *Home*, in which Sheila Jordan sang Creeley's poems, this CD features Creeley reading his own works, sparking the jazz improvisations that follow. The improvisors -- **David Cast**, **Chris Massey**, **Steve Swallow** and **David Torn** (see verso for bio information) – are among the most adventurous jazz players of today. This disc provides a permanent record of the quintet's emotionally moving performance, a work of art in which poetry, music and process become one.

**STEVE SWALLOW** [electric bass], one of the best known names in jazz, was recently voted the #1 electric bassist in Downbeat's 2000 critic's poll. In a career spanning more than 40 years he has collaborated and/or recorded with the Jimmy Giuffre 3, Paul Bley, Pat Metheny, Chick Corea, Stan Getz, Carla Bley, George Russell and almost every other noteworthy figure in the world of jazz. A splendid, supportive bassist, he is one of the few jazz players to permanently "trade in" his string bass in preference for the electric model. He has several solo albums available, including his previous collaboration with Creeley's poetry, "Home".

DAVID TORN [guitar] first burst onto the scene in the mid 80's with the Everyman Band, a NY state outfit that recorded two albums for the ECM label. Since that time, he has lent his distinctive, heavily-processed guitar work to records with Vernon Reid [Living Color], Bill Bruford [King Crimson], Tony Levin [Peter Gabriel], Jan Garbarek, Mark Isham, Terry Bozzio, Happy Rhodes, Richard Barbieri, David Sylvian and many others. His most recent project is the "electronica" based SplatterCell. Torn has released albums under his own name on the ECM, CMP and Windham Hill labels.

DAVID CAST [tenor & soprano saxes/bass clarinet] is one of the best and most exciting of the up and coming artists based in the New York/Woodstock/Knitting Factory music scenes. An alumni of the Berklee College of Music, CasT is equally adept at performing in cutting-edge creative situations and the more standard jazz field. He has performed and/or recorded with artists such as Karl Berger, Don Cherry, Dave Douglas, Gladys Knight, The Four Tops, The Temptations and Otis Rush. CasT has also worked on numerous film scores.

CHRIS MASSEY [drums and percussion] is likewise an alumni of Boston's Berklee College of Music. In addition, Massey also attended master classes with New York Philharmonic conductor Michael Tilson-Thomas. He moved to New York City in 1980, and began playing and recording with other "new music" musicians, including Bill Frisell, Kevin Eubanks, Michael Gibbs, Tom Varner, Vinny Golia, and many more.