

EarthBall

Actual Earth Music Vol 3 & 4

Upset The Rhythm CD/DL/LP

Released in early 2025, the first volume of EarthBall's *Actual Earth Music* series featured live sets recorded in Vancouver and London in 2023 and 2024. Now the Canadian improvisational noise outfit add to the canon with the third and fourth volumes, comprising live recordings made at Cave12 in Geneva and in Utrecht's EKKO venue as part of last winter's Le Guess Who? festival.

The reasoning is simple. While EarthBall can and do commit their voluminous, sprawling sound to studio albums, it is in the live spaces that the EarthBall experience truly takes flight. So why not release an ongoing series of volumes documenting that? Plus, the EarthBall method is to take a loose, existing structure and build around it. Even though their last album, 2025's *Outside Over There*, is ostensibly a studio set, its eight distinct tracks were actually recorded live in band member Kellan McLaughlin's basement, with the collective improvising across themes. So the *Actual Earth Music* albums also work as geographical time-stamps, recording where the band were and how they treated a particular track, theme or idea on the day.

The first part of *Volume 3 & 4* is EarthBall's 53 minute Geneva set (or, if you buy the LP format, the first 22 minutes of the performance). Here, the band meander into some kind of timestretching exercise as squalls from Liam Murphy's sax and McLaughlin's guitar squeak breathlessly around Isabel Ford's fumbling bass, John Brennan's tumbling drums and multi-instrumentalist Jeremy Van Wyck's percussive interpolations.

The live set from Le Guess Who? finds EarthBall in ultra-maximalist form. Interspersed with Ford and Van Wyck's sneering vocals, the band thrash about like sharks trapped in a shallow pool. By turns revelatory, paranoid and meditative, this is music as sonic performance art.

Simon Coates