

Full Blast & Friends: Sketches and Ballads - review

(Trost)

5 / 5

**John Fordham**

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FULL BLAST & FRIENDS
SKETCHES AND BALLADS

**Full Blast & Friends
Sketches And
Ballads**

Trost Records
2011

Though there are plenty of episodes on this single, 38-minute piece composed by Full Blast's drummer [Michael Wertmüller](#) that might qualify as a sketch or a ballad, eruptions of atonalism are always just round the corner – because the front line features those paint-stripping free-sax stars [Peter Brötzmann](#) and [Ken Vandermark](#), with New York downtown trumpeter [Thomas Heberer](#) in close attendance. Wertmüller's score is pretty specific and intricate; it apparently runs to 50 tightly packed pages, with almost unplayably scary computer-aided time signatures. The improvising is concentrated into explosive epithets between passages that are sometimes squabby, sometimes as solemn as a march or a ghostly proclamation by [Albert Ayler](#), and display a percussive breadth, from tump-like rumbles to frantic, free-jazzy clamourings. Heberer's slow-turning trumpet figures against expostulatory rejoinders from the saxes, Brötzmann's keening

Hungarian [tárogató](#), and a richness of texture that embraces the abrasive and the sumptuously orchestral, amount to an imposing example of free-improv unhampered by the tight leash it's on.