

Music

Commitment



5C Cultural Center & Café;
Thu 28

It likely has little to do with popular culture's renewed interest in zombies, but for one night, at least, the seminal free-jazz quartet Commitment is coming back

from the dead. Featuring saxophonist Will Connell's considered bleating, Jason Kao Hwang's soaring violin, William Parker's earthy bass sojourns and Zen Matsuura's attentive drumming, the band is reassembling behind an impressive new two-CD set, *Commitment: The Complete Recordings 1981/1983*. Thursday's gig in the East Village—the band's old stomping grounds—will be its first in 27 years.

Active from 1978 to 1984, Commitment dared to skew slow and mysterious, favoring mournful melodies and wide-open spaces over

opportunities to thrash and burn (though they could do that, too). As evidenced by the live material included on *The Complete Recordings*, they were also unafraid of rhythm: Songs like "Ocean" and "Whole Grain" swung just as hard as they skronked, with Matsuura lighting a fire under the group. When the loft scene disintegrated, Commitment did too, but their presence was felt for years to come: Parker and Matsuura powered ensembles led by Roy Campbell and Billy Bang, Connell played in Parker's Little Huey Creative Music Orchestra, and Hwang and Connell took chairs in trombonist Steve Swell's Nation of We.

Commitment was also pioneering in its combination of Asian and African-American musicians, a not-uncommon configuration today, but rare at the time. Musically as well as culturally, the members of Commitment were looking to come together, an attitude they'll no doubt resuscitate here.—*Brad Farberman*

TOP LIVE SHOWS

Thursday 28

Jazz & experimental

* **Commitment** 5C Cultural Center and Café, East Village. 8pm; \$10. See Top Live Shows.